

“HEALING SPACES OF REFUGE”: SOCIAL JUSTICE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT,
RADICAL HEALING, AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION FOR BLACK YOUTH

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the relationships between trauma and oppression in the lives of Black youth is an important area of study because it redefines trauma and its effect on their healthy development into adulthood. While deconstructing how Black youth experience trauma holds a significance, it is also imperative to consider how this group heals from trauma.

Using the Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD) framework and the radical healing process as a guide, this research study was created to conduct an in-depth examination of a youth development program that employed artistic expression as a tool to facilitate radical healing in the lives of Black youth. Qualitative case study methods were used to address the question: How does a 5-week youth development program as a whole facilitate the radical healing process through its four components (care, critical consciousness, community, and culture)?

Findings from this case study showed that Black youth enrolled in a summer arts program in South Dallas, Texas navigate oppressive forces in their community but experience a radical healing process in what I name a ‘healing space of refuge.’ This ‘healing space of refuge’ provided youth with 1) adults that enact radical care for their personal and community well-being, 2) a space to celebrate their cultural identity, and 3) a culture of critical thinking that assisted them in building their critical consciousness.

Specific program processes related to radical care were displayed through

development of familial relationships, program resistance against institutional oppression, and the adoption of survival tactics. Processes related to creating a space that celebrated the cultural identity of Black youth were displayed through an adoption of critical pedagogical methods and collective actions that celebrated Black youth identity. Processes related to creating a culture of critical thinking to develop critical consciousness were displayed through the use of instances of misunderstandings to collectively cultivate critical thinking skills and the program outcomes of Black youth gaining knowledge of history, knowledge of self, an understanding of community, and an understanding of social justice.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the youth, teachers, volunteers, managers, and community of the South Dallas Cultural Center. It is through the opportunity to become a part of your healing space of refuge that I create new visions for a better world.

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The struggle continues...

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When many of us hear the word ‘trauma’ we may automatically connect it to a physical threat of death or serious injury. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders* (DMS-IV-TR) trauma is defined as:

Direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one’s physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate (Criterion A1). The person’s response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror (or in children, the response must involve disorganized or agitated behavior) (Criterion A2) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 463).

While this definition is helpful in diagnosing trauma, it does not address the ways in which oppression can be a source of trauma for people who endure oppressive forces each and every day of their lives. The term ‘oppressive forces’ is used to describe how oppression based processes utilize force to remove all power from certain groups so they, in turn, become marginalized in society (Freire, 1970/2009). In this dissertation I will contextualize oppression in a way that acknowledges trauma as a form of oppression that effects groups like Black¹ youth as they navigate education, health, and political systems.

¹ I purposefully use the term Black to honor and adopt the language used by the 1960’s Black power movement which centered the importance of building strong communities to end oppression and achieve liberation to connect with the overall theme of this dissertation (Ture & Hamilton, 1967). I capitalize the word as a “form of strategic essentialism and solidarity with the oppressed” (Akom, 2009, p. 64).

Systems like the education system tend to perpetuate forms of oppression through the use of zero tolerance policies which fuel the school-to-prison pipeline² that places many youth of color under the power of the juvenile justice system (Daly, et al., 2016). This pipeline, along with other oppressive forces that exist in economic, political, and health systems, render Black youth powerless under macro level systems and I argue that the mere existence of these systems are inherently traumatic because they remove forms of power Black youth should have over their healthy development into adulthood.

The oppression that Black youth experience has been conceptualized as a form of racialized trauma (Daniel, 2000; Carter, 2007; Carter & Forsyth, 2009; Jernigan & Daniel, 2011). It is the existence of zero-tolerance policies that promote harsher discipline sentences and the increase of police, referred to as “safety resource officers,” in schools that fuel the school-to-prison pipeline and increase racialized trauma in the lives of Black youth (Mallett, 2015). Wald and Losen (2003) reported that Black boys were 2.6 times more likely to be suspended in school than White boys and Crenshaw, et al., (2015) reported that Black girls were 6 times more likely to be suspended than White girls. This research supports the argument that schools within the education system apply oppressive zero-tolerance policies to push Black youth out of the school and this “pushout” is one example of the racialized trauma they endure (Morris, 2016).

While redefining trauma and its effect on the lives of Black youth is an important area of study, it is also imperative to consider how Black youth heal from this trauma.

² The school-to-prison pipeline is considered a “set of policies and practices in schools that make it more likely for students to face criminal involvement with the juvenile courts than to attain a quality education (Mallett, 2015, p. 1).

This case study was created to conduct an in-depth examination of the SJYD framework (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002) and the radical healing process (Ginwright, 2010a) in a youth development program. My original intent was to examine the specific youth development program processes that facilitated the radical healing process for Black youth enrolled in a summer program. However, the data collection process led to a complete immersion into the lives and the community of the youth that attended the program. It was through this immersion that I examined how Black youth living in South Dallas, Texas navigate oppressive forces but consistently return to what I name a *‘healing space of refuge.’*

Qualitative case study methods were applied to provide an in-depth look into this *‘healing space of refuge’*. The unit of analysis for this case study was a 5-week summer program, for youth ages 5-17 years, in South Dallas, Texas named the Summer Arts at the Center (SAAC). The results of this case study showed that this *healing space of refuge* provided youth with 1) adults that enact radical care for their personal and community well-being, 2) a space to celebrate their cultural identity, and 3) a culture of critical thinking that assisted them in building their critical consciousness. This chapter will provide 1) a review of the literature on the frameworks, models, and theories that guided this research (e.g., Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD) framework and radical healing model), 2) the study purpose and research questions, 3) an overview of the methodological strategies applied, and 4) the layout of this dissertation.

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an explanation of the Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD) framework developed by Ginwright and Cammarota (2002), by building its connection to the field of youth development and outlining the components of the radical healing model (Ginwright, 2010a). Theoretical explanations of the SJYD framework will be explored in order to conceptualize the radical healing model. By deconstructing the theories behind the SJYD framework and the radical healing model, I hope to examine the ways in which the framework and the model present themselves in community-based youth programs that serve Black youth like the program examined for this case study.

Social Justice Youth Development Framework

Youth development is defined as an ongoing process that is “attached to young people, not merely the institutions that serve them” (Pittman & Wright, 1991, p. 8). Youth development shifts the focus from studying development in stages to studying engagement and investment or what adults can do to assist young people through the developmental process (Pittman & Wright, 1991). During the early years of the field, many youth development researchers and practitioners focused on preventing problem behaviors. One of the earliest examples of this approach would be the development of settlement homes like Jane Addam’s Hull House established in Chicago, Illinois in the late 1800’s. The Hull House served the purpose of assisting poor immigrant families, specifically children and youth, in assimilating to the United States by providing them with services and support that would prevent immigrant youth from becoming involved

in what could be referred to as street gangs. While the term youth development was not used until the 1940's, the idea behind the Hull House and other settlement homes set an example for the philosophical underpinnings of youth development that have been in effect in the U.S. for over a hundred years. This form of youth development, where the focus is on preventing negative behaviors, is referred to as the problem-prevention model and it dominated the field for many years until the 1980's when there was a shift from viewing youth as problems to placing a focus on the assets youth hold to benefit their communities.

This new model is referred to as positive youth development (PYD) and is defined as a “process in which young people’s capacity for being motivated by challenge energizes their active engagement in development” (Larson, 2006, p. 677). The focus of PYD is to promote assets that youth already hold and foster assets they do not. The PYD model argues that youth must display certain characteristics (i.e., personal competence, social maturity, and sense of identity and self-esteem) in order to develop into fully functioning adults with parents and the community providing support, opportunities, programs, and services (SOPS) to foster these characteristics (Pittman & Wright, 1991). The belief that development is something that adults “do” to young people is an attitude that permeates the globe and the notion that youth can be active agents in their own development is a fairly new concept. Currently, the field of youth development and theories like PYD advocate for this very notion. When young people are given the ability to become the producers of their own development it fosters PYD (Larson, 2006). Richard Lerner utilizes 5 C's as a model for PYD where 1) competence, 2) confidence,

3) character, 4) connection, and 5) caring are critical to youth development (Lerner, et al., 2005). Lerner also argues, "...the theory of PYD that has emerged in the adolescent development literature which specifies that if young people have mutually beneficial relations with the people and institutions of their social world, they will be on the way to a hopeful future marked by positive contributions to self, family, community, and civil society" (2005, p. 12).

Fostering positive relationships between young people and their youth-serving communities/institutions is crucial to the development of a young person (Rauner, 2000). PYD promotes the premise that youth need SOPS to survive and thrive into adulthood and a number of communities and institutions all over the globe are making attempts to provide them. However, it is important to recognize that certain populations of youth may need different models and possibly different frameworks altogether for their development. According to Ginwright and Cammarota, "both models (problem/prevention and positive youth development) obscure our understanding of urban youth of color more than they explain, because they assume that youth themselves should be changed, rather than the oppressive environments in which they live" (2002, p. 85). The Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD) framework is significant because it explores youth development, specifically for youth of color, not just at the individual level but also considers the macro level by examining the role the environment and the systemic issues they face directly and its effect on their development.

Theory Behind Social Justice Youth Development

Ideally, SJYD provides youth of color with the space and opportunity to develop critical consciousness and engage in social action. These two aspects of the framework were directly influenced by what education scholar Paulo Freire (1970/2009) refers to as “praxis” in his famous work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Praxis is defined as the interdependence between critical consciousness and social action. Scholars Ginwright and Cammarota utilize praxis as the foundation of their SJYD framework and argue, “we become closer to our humanity and agents of our own development when we reflect and act to transform the conditions influencing our existence” (2002, p. 87). Contrary to the assumptions made by adults about a young person’s ability to think critically about the world around them, the SJYD framework argues that youth, particularly youth of color, are capable and are in need of developing a critical consciousness in order to engage in social action to address individual-level and community-level issues. If we consider youth of color to be an oppressed group within our society, youth development researchers and practitioners must examine the ways in which their oppression operates and assist youth in fighting against the oppressive forces that work against them. According to Freire, “It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves. This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis” (1970/2009, p.65). What Freire (1970/2009) refers to as “serious reflection” in this quote is considered to be the development of a critical consciousness. When a young

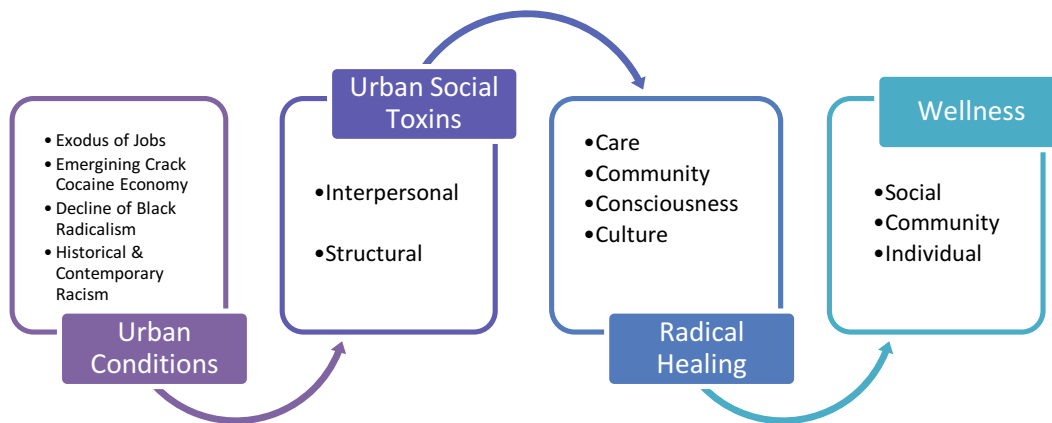
person reflects upon their world and the systems at play that prevent them from having a healthy development, they are developing their critical consciousness. When this reflection turns into actual acts to resist and address the systems, this would be considered engagement in social action. The SJYD framework utilizes Freire's theory of praxis in order to foster healthy development for youth of color through building levels of awareness in order to develop a critical consciousness.

The Radical Healing Model

The SJYD framework became the basis for what Ginwright (2010a) refers to as the radical healing model. Ginwright's book, *Black Youth Rising: Activism and Radical Healing in Urban American* (2010a) examines this model within the context of a community youth program. The radical healing model is used to build "the capacity of young people to act upon their environment in ways that contribute to the common good" (Ginwright, 2010a, p. 8). Radical healing prepares young people to shift their consciousness from blaming themselves for problems in their community and society to developing a lens of critical consciousness that examines the root and systemic causes of their personal and community problems (Ginwright, 2010a). When Ginwright uses the term healing, he is referring to feminist scholar bell hooks definition of collective healing. "When we share these stories, we form the type of community bell hooks (1996) refers to as "beloved community" – where loving ties of care and knowing bind us together in our differences," and our collective consciousness builds space where the possibility of remembering, healing, and growing occurs" (Ginwright, 2010a, p. 10). The radical healing model is made up of several components that specifically focus on the

issues youth of color face when living in an urban environment, how the effects of this environment can be addressed with the use of radical healing, and how social, community, and individual wellness is the final goal. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the radical healing model.

Figure 1: The Radical Healing Model



Urban Conditions and Social Toxins

The radical healing model argues that the removal of jobs, emergence of crack cocaine economy, decline of black radicalism, and the historical and contemporary racism in urban areas attribute to the conditions that lead to and create a socially toxic environment for the youth of color (Ginwright, 2010a). Garbarino writes that social toxins are

easy enough to identify: violence, poverty and other economic pressures on parents and their children, disruption of relationships, nastiness, despair,

depression, paranoia, alienation— all the things that demoralize families and communities. These are the forces in the land that pollute the environment of children and youth. These are the elements of social toxicity (1995, p. 4).

While the radical healing model was developed with the city of Oakland, California in mind, the urban conditions listed can be applied to cities all over the United States.

Black communities located in urban areas in major cities experience higher unemployment and poverty rates. For example, the South Dallas community, located in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, had an unemployment rate of 17.3% in 2012 (City of Dallas Office of Economic Development, 2013) and there were 38% of children and youth living in poverty in 2014 (National Kids Count Data Center, 2014).

When the U.S. federal government declared war on drugs in the 1980's urban areas began to experience a set of conditions where crack cocaine economies thrived (Freudenberg, 2001; Ginwright, 2010a; Alexander, 2012). Civil rights law scholar, Michelle Alexander, deconstructs this argument in her book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2012). Alexander writes,

This is the War on Drugs...In every state across the nation, African Americans- particularly in the poorest neighborhoods- are subject to tactics and practices that would result in public outrage and scandal if committed in middle-class white neighborhoods. In the drug war, the enemy is racially defined. The law enforcement methods... have been employed almost exclusively in poor communities of color, resulting in jaw-dropping numbers of African Americans and Latinos filling our nation's prisons and jails every year. We are told by drug warriors that the enemy in this war is a thing- drugs- not a group of people, but the facts prove otherwise (2012, p. 95).

Alexander provides an examination of the ways in which law enforcement efforts and social policies like the war on drugs affect people of color, specifically youth of color.

Many of them are viewed as violent drug users and sellers but the research indicates that

this is the furthest from the truth. The racial implications of these stereotypes effect youth of color in a number of ways including the over-policing of their neighborhoods. This over-policing may cause young people of color to feel like they have no control over their environment and create issues surrounding feelings of safety (e.g., a young person fearing the police because of past traumatic experiences).

Ginwright (2010a) argues that the urban social toxins in the radical healing model are interpersonal and structural. The interpersonal toxins have to do with violence, fear, shame, uncertainty, nihilism, and loss of control while the structural toxins are poverty, family dislocation, lack of access to health care, racism, and poor-quality schools (Ginwright, 2010a). The structural toxins are what cause youth of color to become marginalized and the interpersonal toxins are attributed to internalized oppressions (Freire, 1970/2009). When one internalizes oppression it results in a negative view of self and individuals that hold an identity similar to them. Freire writes, “Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them” (1970/2000, p. 63). The internalization of the oppression that comes from the structures and systems that work to marginalize youth of color are not easy to combat but Ginwright (2010a) proposes that we must focus on assisting youth to heal from the trauma of this oppression and marginalization. This is where the radical healing process enters the model.

The Radical Healing Process

The radical healing process contributes to four areas of a young person’s life and Ginwright argues that most, if not all, of these areas have the potential of being fostered

in a community youth program (2010a). 1) *Care*, 2) *community*, 3) *critical consciousness*, and 4) *culture* come together to facilitate the radical healing process. “Radical healing as an ecologically responsive strategy highlights (1) the socially toxic conditions in urban communities, (2) the process for building the capacity for youth to respond to these conditions, and (3) the ways in which social justice, agency and resistance can contribute to individual, community, and broader social wellness” (Ginwright, 2010c, p. 89). The goal of the radical healing process is to get youth of color to “envision new possibilities for their lives and their communities” (Ginwright, 2010a, p. 11). Radical healing provides researchers and practitioners with opportunities to form concepts about the conditions that threaten community life and understand the process that creates a civic well-being for youth. This model encourages healing in these four areas (*care, community, critical consciousness, and culture*) of a young person to foster a collective optimism and a spiritual transformation that contributes to a healthy development and community life for everyone over time (Ginwright, 2010b). Youth development practitioners and researchers can use *care, community, critical consciousness*, and *culture* to build the capacity of young people to construct the type of communities they would like to live in (Ginwright, 2010c).

Within the radical healing model, *care*, or what is also referred to as caring relationships, is more than just the development of trust, holding shared expectations, or deep connections between individuals (Ginwright, 2010c). When working with youth of color caring relationships occur at both the individual and community levels. Providing care for youth of color can be defined as “promoting cultural integrity, communal and

individual survival, spiritual growth, and political change under oppressive conditions” (Thompson, 1995, p. 29). This form of care serves as a revolutionary cure to the traumas of urban conditions and social toxins because it leads to healing and the development of passions surrounding justice (Ginwright, 2010c). Based on the ways in which Ginwright (2010a) and Thompson (1995) conceptualize care or caring relationships in a way that prepares Black youth to know themselves (i.e., identity development) as part of a long history of struggle and triumph.

Communities serve as private spaces where young people “cultivate resistance against beliefs, attitudes, and practices that can erode a black child’s self-confidence and impair her positive identity development” (Ward, 2000, p. 51). Taking this definition of community into consideration, the radical healing model views community as an important aspect to the development of a young person’s identity and social consciousness. As discussed earlier in this review, bell hooks’ notion of “beloved community” (1996) provides a basis for what Ginwright (2010a) visions for this area of radical healing, where community is a space for youth to actively share the traumas they have experienced and form a collective space where everyone heals together in their own way.

Developing a *critical consciousness* about their social world prepares Black youth to resist various forms of oppression. This form of consciousness focuses on young people building awareness of the intersections of personal and political life in order to understand how personal struggles have profound political explanations (Ginwright, 2010a). The development of critical consciousness among youth is studied

through the lens of sociopolitical awareness in many fields (Deimer & Blustein, 2006; Watts, et al., 2007). When a young person begins to understand the social and political implications to their individual and community problems, their critical conscious is developing (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). This area of radical healing connects to the SJYD framework which proposes that youth will progress through three levels of awareness in order to achieve complete critical consciousness (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002).

Culture serves as the last component of the model, where youth of color are encouraged to explore all aspects of their identities. According to Ginwright (2010a),

culture serves as an anchor to connect young people to a racial and ethnic identity that is both historically grounded and contemporarily relevant. This view of culture embraces both the importance of a healthy African identity for Black youth and celebrates the vibrancy and ingenuity of urban Black youth of color (p. 10).

The use of culture in the radical healing model is for youth of color to develop a positive sense of self and their communities. The mass media constantly shows images of youth of color in negative ways (Giroux, 2000). The radical healing model encourages youth to address this issue and create a positive identity for themselves (Ginwright, 2010a).

Through the culture component of the model, youth are also encouraged to explore their own culture, referred to as youth culture in the fields of youth development, education, and psychology.

Wellness

Wellness is linked to power and control over internal and external forms of oppression (Ginwright, 2010c). The radical healing process, discussed above, facilitates

wellness on three levels: 1) individual, 2) community, and 3) social. The focus of *individual wellness* deals with strengthening political and social consciousness, hope, optimism, and voice among young people (Ginwright, 2010a). Ginwright (2010c) argues that SJYD researchers and practitioners tend to focus on youth resisting as oppose to creating new, better ways to live. The development of critical consciousness encourages youth to not only resist dominant structures and systems that oppress them but to also engage in action to create a better life for themselves and their communities.

Community wellness consists of community solidarity, collective consciousness, community power, civic action, relationship, trust, social capital, and community thriving (Ginwright, 2010a). The focus here is on building collective power and gaining control of local public policy (Ginwright, 2010c). When a young person has achieved this level of wellness they may engage in behaviors like organizing their neighborhood block party or attending a school board meeting about school closures. One would argue that this young person has optimism about the capacity to create social change. *Social wellness* includes social movements, collective action, liberation, freedom “from” oppression, freedom “to” create, social justice, and peace (Ginwright, 2010a). One would argue that a young person at this level of awareness is completely civically engaged with the world they live in.

Artistic Expression as a Tool in Youth Development Programs

Community arts and humanities programs for youth are known to (1) create safe spaces where they can develop positive relationships with other adults and their peers, (2) build their sense of worth and achievement, (3) give youth concrete job skills through

the creative teaching methods like hands-on-learning, apprenticeships, and technology use, (4) build on what youth value and understand, and (5) provide youth with opportunities to be valued community members (Weitz, 1996). With the emergence of PYD models and theories in the late 1980's, youth development researchers began to empirically examine how artistic expression programs and models can be used to facilitate PYD (Larson & Walker, 2006, Grace & Wells, 2006, Wright, et al., 2006, Larson, et al., 2005).

Recreational youth development programs provide young people with the space to creatively express themselves in ways that they are unable to do in traditional educational settings like school. The SJYD framework builds upon the idea of using creative expression as a tool to empower young people by interpreting creative expression as a form of activism. According to Ginwright (2010a),

Building upon the legacy of 1960s civil rights organizations, black activist organizations today focus on building activism among black youth through hip-hop culture, poetry, and film. Perhaps what is most powerful about these modes of activism is that they all have created a vision of how black communities can heal, organize, and build new spaces of possibilities (pg. 145).

Artistic expression programming is a great tool for youth development programs that set goals to empower youth but placing a social justice lens on this tool turns it into a powerful method youth use to develop their critical consciousness and engage in social action.

For the purpose of this literature review, I will use the artistic expression of hip-hop music as an example. When examining a history of hip-hop music and culture, one can easily connect the framework of social justice and the radical healing model to this

art form. Early hip-hop music provided sociopolitical themes related to injustices young people of color faced and youth were at the center of producing this music (Kitwana, 2002, Forman and Neal, 2004, Chang, 2007). The so-called godfather of hip-hop, Afrika Bambaata, cites the founding elements of hip-hop culture as 1) DJ'ing, 2) emceeing, 3) breakdancing, 4) graffiti art, and 5) knowledge (Kitwana, 2006). The youth that created and engaged with these different elements were not only using creative ways to express themselves, they were also using hip-hop culture as a tool for healing. Caring relationships were developed through the DJ and emcee duos and b-boy and b-girl groups or cliques.

Caring communities were at the center of the inception of hip-hop culture and this can be explored through the first hip-hop parties in the South Bronx. These parties were not just a group of young people coming together to party, many of them served as tool for community organizing. The first documented hip-hop party was a back-to-school party and school supplies for elementary-aged children were collected as admission into the party (Chang, 2007). The development of hip-hop groups, like the Universal Zulu Nation also provided a sense of community for youth of color engaged in hip-hop culture (Chang, 2007). The Zulu Nation is known for not only citing the first four elements of hip-hop culture but also adding the fifth element of knowledge. This element of knowledge is related to the critical consciousness component of the radical healing process where the sociopolitical music produced by this culture assist its listeners in developing their critical thinking skills and critical consciousness. Lastly, hip-hop music is just an entity of the entire culture of hip-hop. Hip-hop culture is

constantly changing but continues to address sociopolitical issues through some of its music today.

Listening to, producing, and performing hip-hop music can serve as a tool for positive youth development and a number of youth programs here in the U.S. and globally have taken advantage of it to help young people heal from the daily social traumas they deal with. This research project will explore the processes involved in radical healing and specifically examine the artistic expression of hip-hop music in a 5-week youth development program.

It is important to note that the radical healing model is much more extensive than simply moving from pathology (i.e., internalized oppression) to wellness. "The concept focuses on how hope, imagination, and care transform the capacity of communities to confront community problems. For young people, healing fosters a collective optimism and a transformation of spirit that, over time, contributes to healthy, vibrant community life" (Ginwright, 2010a, p. 11). When youth of color engage in community youth programs that follow SJYD frameworks and models like radical healing, they gain 1) *caring relationships*, 2) *a sense of community*, 3) *the development of critical consciousness*, and 4) *a positive view of their culture* and how it can be used for justice (Ginwright, 2010a). Although community youth programs that serve youth of color do not specifically utilize the radical healing model in the development of their programming, the development of caring relationships, establishment of community, and developing a positive cultural identity along with a critical consciousness tend to be the outcomes for a great deal of programs that serve youth of color.

The radical healing model provides youth researchers and practitioners with a list of best practices and outcomes to expect with the implementation of the model. However, the creator of the radical healing model completed the only empirical studies performed on this model. While this is not problematic, it is important to examine how youth development programs utilize creative ways to implement this model. According to Ginwright (2010a), fields like youth development have failed to empirically address the dimensions of healing, hope, and freedom. This research study will add to the almost non-existent body of research in this area by providing an in-depth analysis of the power of healing spaces of refuge for Black youth.

Study Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to advance our understanding of the SJYD framework and radical healing process by examining the facilitation of radical healing at a 5-week summer youth development program in South Dallas. While many youth development programs employ SJYD theories to their programming, understanding the processes that go into implementing the SJYD framework is an important area of study. How do Black youth heal from the oppressive forces they face each day as they navigate through their development? This is one question that the radical healing model attempts to answer for those interested in the SJYD framework. While the radical healing model holds significance to the SJYD framework, it was created based on data from only one program in Oakland, California. Despite Oakland holding a rich history of Black people

organizing around social justice issues, as it is the community where the Black Panther Party for Self Defense began, the lack of replication is a serious limitation.

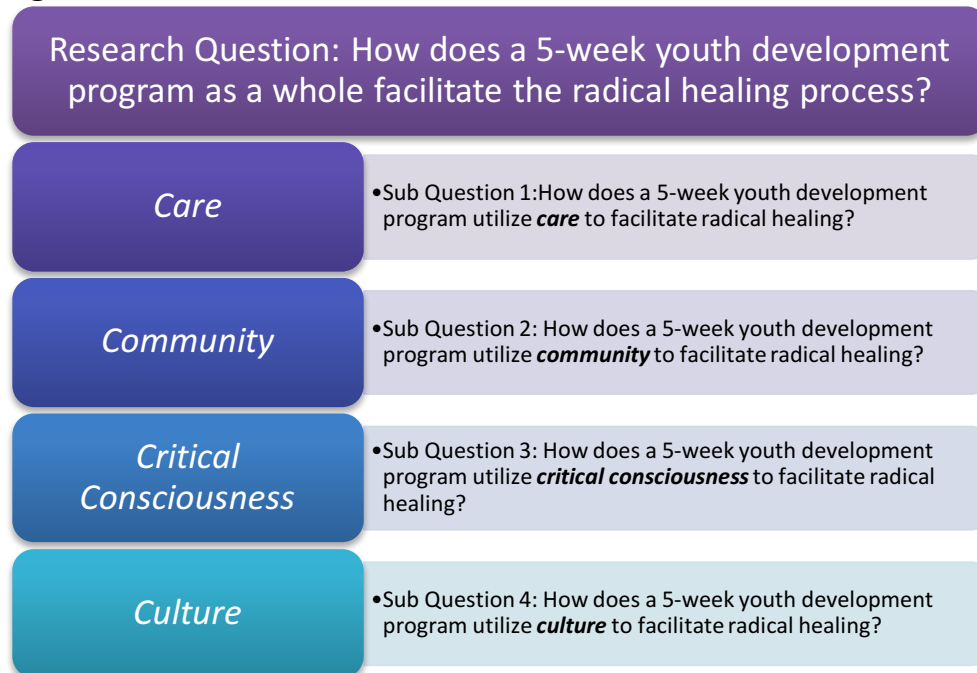
In order to examine SJYD and the radical healing model further, the South Dallas Cultural Center's (SDCC) Summer Arts at the Center (SAAC) program was selected for this case study. The community of South Dallas holds a rich history of organizing but is much different than Oakland. My original intent for this case study was to examine the program processes that facilitated the healing for Black youth enrolled in this summer program. However, through the progression of data collection I discovered that the lived experiences of the youth and adults in the program held the answers to the program processes that facilitate radical healing within the space. I began the data collection process with the intent of answering the following research questions (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Original Case Study Research Questions



As the 5-week data collection of this case study progressed, the study evolved into an ethnographic process that relied heavily on lived experiences. Based on the evolving nature of this case study, the research questions shifted from examining processes to investigating the four components of the radical healing process (*care*, *community*, *critical consciousness*, and *culture*). Through this investigation, the following questions displayed in Figure 3 emerged:

Figure 3: Revised Research Questions



Methodology

Qualitative Case Study

A qualitative approach was used to conduct a case study on a 5-week summer youth development program for this research project. According to Creswell, “case study

research is [can be] a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes” (2012, p. 75). The nature of the case study research method is to 1) answers “how” and “why” research questions (i.e., explanatory case studies) or 2) hypothesize about expected characteristics (i.e., descriptive case studies) (Yin, 2013).

The use of case study methodology was appropriate for this research study because the research questions were both explanatory and exploratory in nature and they focused on one particular case, a 5-week summer youth development program in South Dallas, Texas. This case study examined how SAAC program activities and behaviors facilitated the radical healing process and applied the radical healing model and SJYD framework to the processes of the program. In order to answer the research questions provided above, I employed a number of methods. This section will provide an in-depth explanation of the methodology applied to this research study. One strategy used for this case study design and data analysis is what Yin (2013) refers to as relying on theoretical propositions. The SJYD framework and theories were applied to the design and analysis of this case study and more specifically, social justice guided all the ways in which I approached the design, data collection, analysis, and write-up of this study.

A social justice approach focused on critical humanism contextualized this research. According to Ginwright and Cammarota,

A social justice approach is akin to a critical humanism approach that emphasizes the importance of the researcher's "human subjectivity, experience and creativity"... The inclusion of critical humanism in social justice research allows the researcher to reflect on his or her own experience as a valuable source of knowledge to guide research questions. This personal reflection may reveal unjust experiences that, in turn, lead to critical insights about how research can serve as a practice of liberation (2015, p. 164).

Applying this social justice approach to the research, I designed this case study with the following three principles proposed by Ginwright & Cammarota (2015) in mind:

- (1) The researcher's personal experiences can contribute to empirical insights about social justice
- (2) Social justice research is informed by critical self-reflection and action
- (3) Social justice research requires deep community relationships, time, and commitment

The first principle listed above was the focal point of the data collection process. As I conducted this case study, I took part in both direct observations and participant-observations every day of the 5-week summer youth development program. Secondly, I used the SJYD framework and the radical healing model to inform my own self-reflections during this case study. Each day of the program I recorded in-depth field notes recalling the activities and experiences from the day along with conducting in-depth interviews and focus groups with program staff and youth. The final principle requires establishing deep community relationships, time, and commitment. Throughout the five weeks and well after the case study was conducted, I continued to establish and maintain relationships with the staff of the SAAC program and community organizations and members in South Dallas. Although the data collection process for this case study

only lasted the length of the SAAC program (5 weeks), a commitment to continue the research process with the SAAC program is in place. The following sections will provide an overview of research design and data collection and analysis procedures.

Unit of Analysis

In case study research the unit of analysis defines and bounds the case (Yin, 2013). The unit of analysis for this case study is the Summer Arts at the Center (SAAC) program held at the South Dallas Cultural Center (SDCC). SAAC is a yearly 5-week summer program for Black children and youth between the ages of 5 and 17 years living in South Dallas. Data collection took place between *June 15, 2015* and *July 17, 2015* at the SDCC location. The SAAC program was selected as the unit of analysis for this case study because it holds similarities to the original Oakland, CA program used to create the radical healing model. The SAAC program centers social justice through its approach to program activities, relationships, and structure. In addition to this, the outcomes set for the SAAC program (understanding of community, understanding of social justice, knowledge of history, and knowledge of self) closely aligned with the components of the radical healing process (care, community, critical consciousness, and culture).

Data Collection Procedures

Yin (2013) suggests, “the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of *converging lines of inquiry*...Thus, any case study finding or conclusion is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on

several different sources of information, following a similar convergence” (p. 120). The data collection included five sources of information:

- (1) Youth Participant Focus Groups
- (2) Youth Participant Interviews
- (3) Adult Program Staff/Teacher Participant Interviews
- (4) Site Observations
- (5) Artifact Review

Focus group and interview protocols were developed based on the four components of the radical healing process (*care, community, critical consciousness, and culture*) (Ginwright, 2010a). Protocol questions were written to narrow the study research question and sub questions (Creswell, 2012). Appendices B and C contain the final versions of focus group and interview protocols used for this study. At the start of each interview, study participants were provided with an overview of the study again and asked for permission to be audio-recorded. All of the focus groups and interviews were recorded. Most interviews began by asking participants how they became involved in the program followed by the rest of the questions on the protocol. Written notes were recorded during and after the conclusion of each interview to recount focus group and interview details.

All adult study participants were asked to review and sign an informed consent form before participating in an interview and all youth participants were given parental permission forms to have their parent/guardian sign. After returning their parental permission form, youth were asked to review and sign an informed consent form (See

Appendix A to view all consent forms). In addition to this, the following safeguards were employed to ensure participant's rights: 1) the participants were informed of all data collection procedures, 2) transcriptions and a final report was made available to the participants, 3) participant's preferences were taken into consideration when choices were made about reporting the data from this case study, and 4) the entire research design was reviewed and approved by the Texas A&M Institutional Review Board. During the consent process, I assured all youth participants that I would not associate their identities with any interview comments and had each of them to provide a pseudonym. However, when the adult program staff and teachers were consented and I asked for a pseudonym, they insisted on attaching their names to their interview comments.

Although adult program staff/teachers caused ethical dilemmas through the insistence on using their personal names, through extensive conversation with these participants I made the decision to honor their wishes. According to Giordano et al. (2007), "This scenario is neither unusual nor unexpected, as participants often view such identification as a way of "giving voice" to their personal experience (of a disorder, situation, and so forth) or a cause, serving as an exemplar and/or being empowered" (p. 266). The names of the adult program staff/teachers were used in this dissertation to give voice to their personal lived experiences in the program and honor their wishes by giving them voice.

Adult Program Staff/Teacher Consent Process

To initiate interviews with adult program staff/teachers, I approached them during program activities, provided an overview of the study, and asked if they would be interested in participating. If they agreed, I provided an informed consent for their review and signature. After each adult program staff/teacher provided informed consent, an interview time was arranged. The majority of these interviews took place in the teacher's classrooms or program staff offices.

Youth Consent Process

While my initial intent was to conduct focus groups and interviews with all the youth in the SAAC program, the program manager insisted that I solely focus on my research effort on youth between the ages of thirteen and seventeen enrolled in the program. The reason behind this request had a great deal to do with the structure and schedule of program activities each day. Youth were divided into groups by age range and they rotated between activities each hour or hour to an hour and half. Due to the fact that there was little to no free time for youth younger than thirteen years old, the program manager decided it would be best to only conduct focus groups and interviews with youth in the 13 through 17 year old group. As a result, only youth in this particular age group were consented, interviewed, and/or participated in focus groups for this case study.

For the youth in the 13 through 17 year old group, I provided an overview of the study and parental permission forms to youth. When the youth brought their parental permission form back, I provided them with an overview of the study and asked if they

were still interested in participating in an interview and focus group. If consent was granted, I scheduled a time to conduct interviews during designated times youth had free time from program activities. When I was provided opportunities by program staff to conduct youth focus groups, I asked for volunteers. All youth that volunteered to participate in the focus group were provided another overview of the study and reminded that their participation was voluntary.

Youth Participant Focus Groups

Two focus group discussions were conducted with youth participants. Eleven youth participated in the first focus group and eight youth participated in the second. Focus group methods were selected for this case study because the nature of the focus group is closely related to the radical healing process. Healing through community connections and interactions is an aspect of radical healing and the community tends to engage in the healing process as a collective. Ginwright (2010a) refers to this as collective healing. The focus group attempted to provide youth with a space to reflect on the program processes as a group or community and engage in collective healing. The structure of the program only allowed for two focus groups to be conducted with youth participants over the 5 weeks due to time only being available for focus groups when a teacher became ill and was unable to teach class. The first focus group lasted approximately 37 minutes and the second focus group lasted approximately one hour. In order to categorize the data into a coding scheme, all focus groups discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed (See Appendix B for focus group protocol).

Youth and Program Staff/Teacher Participant Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted throughout the duration of the 5-week SAAC program with:

- (1) program staff/teachers: 16 interviews
- (2) teaching assistants: 6 interviews
- (3) youth from teen group: 5 interviews

This qualitative method was selected in order to provide an intensive examination of the processes involved in the program related to the radical healing process. In-depth interviewing was employed here because program staff, teachers, and teaching assistants implemented all program activities and had the most direct interaction with the youth so they could speak volumes to the processes of the program and facilitation of the radical healing process. Each interview was one-on-one and lasted approximately 60 minutes. (See Appendix C for interview protocols). In order to categorize the data into a coding scheme, all in-depth interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Site Observations

Participant-observations were conducted each day throughout the five weeks of this case study. Direct observations provide “relevant social or environmental conditions” and participant-observations are specifically conducted when a researcher assumes a certain role within a fieldwork situation (Yin, 2013, p. 113). While conducting this case study I was more than a passive observer, I participated in program activities with the youth in the teen group and even worked with teachers and teaching assistants

to deliver lessons during class. I also attended field trips and wrote poetry with youth participants in the teen group.

Observations were recorded in two different ways during this case study. First, I jotted brief participant-observation notes in a journal during the day while participating in program activities. Second, I audio-recorded participant observations using thick description on the drive home each day. Audio recordings lasted around 90 minutes for each day. In these recordings I would describe the daily program activities and connect them to the radical healing process and the SJYD framework. Upon the completion of this case study, these audio recordings were analyzed along with interviews and focus group discussions.

Artifact Review

Physical and cultural artifacts were also observed as a source of evidence in this case study. Artifacts reviewed for this case study included:

- Murals painted on the walls from previous summers
- Video recordings of final showcase performances from previous summers
- Films created by youth from previous summers
- Photos taken during previous summers
- Printmaking books completed during previous summers
- Poetry books published during previous summers
- Curriculum materials from previous summers
- Images and video recordings of camp activities during the time the case study was conducted

The purpose of observing these artifacts were to gain an in-depth understanding of program processes, the intensity and breadth of the program planning, and progression of ideas about program implementation throughout the existence of the SAAC program.

These artifacts were reviewed during and after the case study was conducted and during data analysis to assist in triggering memories of SAAC program processes.

Data Analysis

Although generalizability was not the focus of this case study, the radical healing model guided data analysis with the data collection process and analysis placing a focus on the four components of the radical healing process (*care, community, critical consciousness, and, culture*). Explanation-building (Yin, 2013), critical ethnography (Creswell, 2012), second order narrative (Creswell, 2012), and critical performance ethnography (Conquergood, 1998) were employed to analyze and synthesize the data for this case study. These methods were selected due to the amount of stories or narratives that participants shared during focus groups and in-depth interviews and the number of performances that took place during participant-observations. This section will provide an overview of the process I applied to iteratively analyze this case study data.

Pattern Matching: Explanation-Building

One strategy employed for case study data analysis is referred to as explanation-building, a form of pattern matching (Yin, 2013). This strategy was used as a tool for data analysis in this case study. The goal of explanation-building “is to analyze the case study data by building an explanation about the case” (Yin, 2013, p. 147). This case study data was analyzed to provide even more explanation about the radical healing process. First, an iterative process for organizing and coding interview, focus group, site observation, and artifact data into the four components of the radical healing process (*care, community, critical consciousness, and culture*) took place. New codes were

created for any data that did not fit into the four components of the radical healing process. Codes related to the history of the community of South Dallas and the SDCC, artistic expression, social toxins and trauma, and barriers to radical healing were created during this iterative process. Figure 4 and figure 5 provide an overview of the themes that developed from each code. Based on these codes, I began to see an overlap between nearly every code and the concept of community, which led to a better explanation of the radical healing process and a restructuring of the model proposed by Ginwright (2010a) that will be discussed in Chapter VII.

Figure 4: Radical Healing Process Themes

| Care | Community | Critical Consciousness | Culture |
|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Meeting Expectations</i>• <i>Familial Relationships</i>• <i>Safe Space</i>• <i>Opportunities</i>• <i>Policy violations</i>• <i>Shared experiences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Center as safe space (space of refuge)</i>• <i>Parental engagement</i>• <i>Connections with orgs and residents</i>• <i>Instill sense of community</i>• <i>Service to community</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Social action</i>• <i>Critical thinking</i>• <i>Praxis</i>• <i>Claiming power and control</i>• <i>Self-determination</i>• <i>Self-discovery/adoration</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Celebration of hip-hop culture</i>• <i>Embrace healthy racial/ethnic identity (blackness)</i>• <i>Awareness of cultural appropriation</i> |

Figure 5: New/Radical Healing Model Theme

| Artistic Expression | History | Social Toxins/ Trauma | Barriers to Radical Healing |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Release of pain/ trauma</i>• <i>Gaining new skills</i>• <i>Cultural expression</i>• <i>Teaching method</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>South Dallas</i>• <i>SDCC</i>• <i>Access to education</i>• <i>Gaining/ sharing new knowledge</i>• <i>Program duration</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Low income urban environment</i>• <i>Family/ home environment</i>• <i>School environment</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Negative views of youth</i>• <i>Staff not prepared, trained, motivated</i>• <i>Youth negative behaviors</i>• <i>Institutional barriers</i> |

Critical Ethnography

Critical ethnography is a type of research where the author advocates for the liberation of societies marginalized groups (Creswell, 2012). I applied critical ethnography through the data analysis process and writing of this dissertation by consistently revisiting the importance of recognizing oppressive power structures and their control over the community conditions. Ethnographic writing provides an opportunity for the researcher to become a storyteller and present the data through their eyes (Creswell, 2012). Although I did not spend the recommended amount of time at the SAAC program for this research study to be labeled as ethnography, the intensive

participant-observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions offered a large amount of rich data that was able to be presented through my eyes.

Second-Order Narrative

Throughout my time conducting this case study and while performing data analysis, stories of lived experiences emerged from the case study participant's interviews, focus groups, artifacts, and my site observations. As a result of the existence of a large amount of stories in the data, I adopted what Creswell refers to as second-order narrative where a researcher or researchers "construct a narrative about other people's experiences or presents a collective story that represents the lives of many" (2012, p. 119). Paying close attention to the relationship these lived experiences had to the radical healing process, I constructed narratives throughout the writing process to explain the lives of the children, youth, and program managers and teachers of the SAAC program. According to Chase,

Breaking from traditional social science practice, narrative researchers are likely to use the first person when presenting their work, thereby emphasizing their own narrative action. As narrators, then, researchers develop meaning out of, and some sense of order in, the material they studied; they develop their own voice(s) as they construct others' voices and realities; they narrate results in ways that are both enabled and constrained by the social resources and circumstances embedded in their disciplines, cultures, and historical moments... (2005, p. 657).

As a result of my adoption of second-order narrative, this dissertation is written using the first person. In addition to this, I consistently attempted to develop meaning on how the radical healing process was displayed within the spaces of the SAAC program.

Critical Performance Ethnography

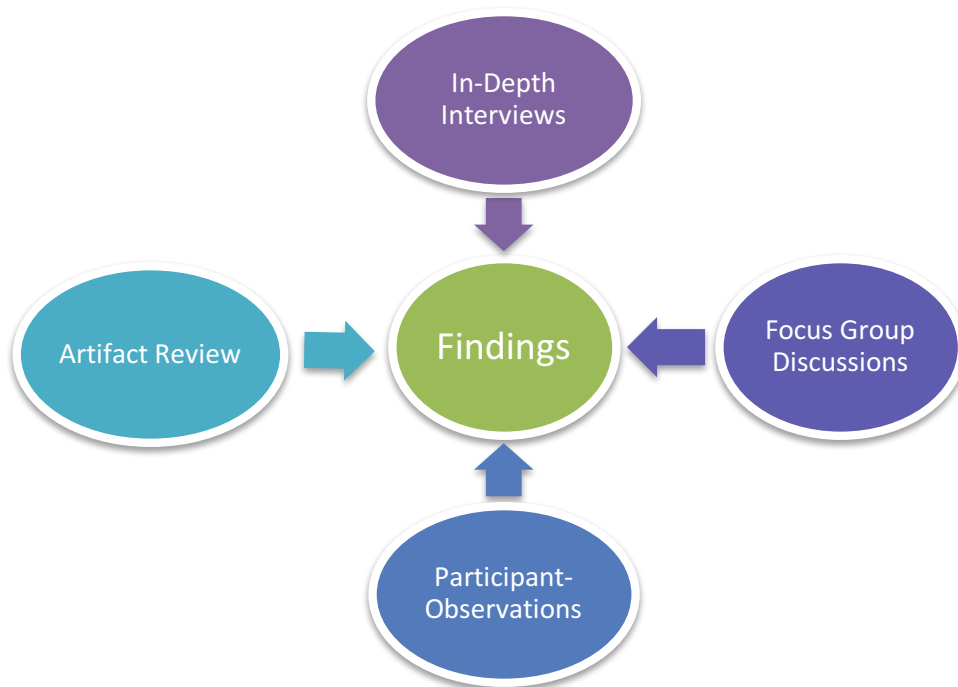
Critical performance ethnography was employed to fit both the richness of the data and the importance of following the philosophy of the SDCC by centering Black art and performance as a tool for liberation. In order to apply critical performance ethnography, I adopted what is referred to as a performance paradigm through the research process. This paradigm adopts an “experiential, participatory epistemology” (Conquergood, 1998, p. 27). Using copperformative witnessing, a method that comes out of the field of performance studies, I viewed my experiences in the field as a performance in order to gain an in-depth understanding of lived experiences (Madison, 2007). Copperformative witnessing “is to live in and spend time in the borderlands of contested identities where you speak ‘with’ not ‘to’ others and where your (and their) ethnographic interlocutors are as co-temporal in the report and on stage as they were in the field” (Madison, 2007, p. 828). The performance paradigm also acknowledges the importance of valuing intimacy and involvement in the field. “This stance allows the self to be vulnerable to its own experiences as well as to the experiences of the other” (Behar, 1996, p. 3). The nature of this case study’s data collection process placed value on the lived experiences of both my participants and myself by centering these experiences through the analysis and synthesis of this case study data.

Trustworthiness and Validity

Trustworthiness was established through the use of data triangulation, a “process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (Stake, 2005, p. 454). Focus groups, individual interviews,

and participant-observations were methods employed to contextualize the multiple meanings and different realities of each individual involved in the SAAC program. Another researcher was employed to analyze and interpret the data collected for this case study in order to establish more trustworthiness. Convergence of multiple sources of evidence was also used to analyze and draw conclusions and strengthen the construct validity of this case study. Figure 6 provides a visual of the ways in which data were converged to address construct validity.

Figure 6: Convergence of Evidence



In order to establish additional levels of trustworthiness for the study, the researcher involved the following techniques during the data analysis stage: (1) coding

checks, (2) attempts to uncover any biases that may have skewed my perspective, (3) comparing the outcomes of the research with all other studies on the radical healing process.

Positionality and Reflexivity

As the primary researcher for this case study, it is important that I address any biases I brought to the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process of this research study. I have been involved in creating and implementing programming for social justice youth programs for the past four years. As a result, there were specific elements related to social justice programming I may have focused more closely on during this research study. In order to address this bias, another research was employed to analyze and interpret the data collected for this case study. While I was not able to remove all my personal biases from this research study, all attempts were made to incorporate program managers, teachers, and youth participants into the data collection, analysis, and interpretation phases of this study to address biases. However, it is important to note that my position and the multiple identities I hold as a Black woman youth development researcher, practitioner, and social justice advocate provided invaluable insights to this case study (Fine, 1994). In other words, my identities as a minority person of color and connections to social justice advocacy programs for Black youth provided richer data for this study.

Case Study Participant Introductions

The South Dallas Cultural Center's SAAC program serves up to 65 children and youth each summer but only 18 youth participated in interviews and focus group

discussions for this case study. This section will provide an overview of both the youth (n=18) and adult program staff/teacher (n=17) participants involved in this case study. Honoring the ethnographic process involved in collecting, analyzing, and writing up the data for this case study, the adult program leaders will be referred to by the names I adopted and called them during the 5-weeks I spent conducting this case study at the SAAC program during the summer of 2015. Table 1 on the next three pages is a list of each individual that participated in this case study through one-on-one or individual interviews and focus group discussions.

Table 1: Case Study Participant Descriptions

| Youth Participant | Description |
|-------------------|---|
| Banie | Banie was working as a teaching assistant during the time this case study was conducted. She has participated in the SAAC program and other SDCC youth activities since she was 10 years old. |
| Blue | Blue was a young person in the teen group during the time this case study was conducted. This was his first year participating in the SAAC program. |
| Brandon | Brandon was a former teaching assistant and youth participant. He has participated in the SAAC program and other SDCC youth activities since he was 5 years old. |
| Bug | Bug was a young person in the teen group during the time this case study was conducted. She has participated in the SAAC program and other SDCC youth activities since she was 10 years old. |
| Butterfly | Butterfly was a young person in the teen group during the time this case study was conducted. This was her second year participating in the SAAC program. |
| Devante' | Devante' was working as a teaching assistant during the time this case study was conducted. He has participated in the SAAC program and other SDCC youth activities since he was 7 years old. |
| Life | Life was a young person in the teen group during the time this case study was conducted. This was her first year participating in the SAAC program. |
| Nina Davis | Nina Davis was working as a teaching assistant during the time this case study was conducted. She has participated in the SAAC program and other SDCC youth activities since she was 9 years old. |
| Purple | Purple was working as a teaching assistant during the time this case study was conducted. She has participated in the SAAC program and other SAAC youth activities since she was 4 years old. |
| Red | Red was a young person in the teen group during the time this case study was conducted. He has participated in the SAAC program and other SDCC youth activities since he was 8 years old. |
| Orange | Orange was a young person that worked as a volunteer teaching assistant during the time this case study was conducted. He has participated in the SAAC program and other SDCC youth activities since he was 10 years old. |
| Egypt | Egypt was a young person in the teen group during the time this case study was conducted. This was her first year participating in the SAAC program. |
| Oumar | Oumar was a young person in the teen group during the time this case study was conducted. This was approximately his third or fourth year participating in the SAAC program and other SDCC youth activities. |

Table 1 Continued

| Youth Participant | Description |
|---------------------|---|
| Superman | Superman was working as a teaching assistant during the time this case study was conducted. The length that Superman has participated in the SAAC program and other SDCC youth activities is unknown but it is at least four to five years. |
| Green | Green was a young person in the teen group during the time this case study was conducted. This was his first year participating in the SAAC program. |
| Me | Me was a young person in the teen group during the time this case study was conducted. This was approximately his third or fourth year participating in the SAAC program and other SDCC youth activities. |
| Justice | Justice was a young person in the teen group during the time this case study was conducted. This was approximately his second or third year participating in the SAAC program and other SDCC youth activities. |
| Gaia | Gaia was a young person in the teen group during the time this case study was conducted. This was her first year participating in the SAAC program. |
| Program Staff | Description |
| Ms. Vicki | Ms. Vicki is the manager of the SDCC and the creator of the SAAC program. Ms. Vicki has worked at the SDCC since 1997. |
| Mr. Harold | Mr. Harold is the assistant manager of the SDCC and he worked as a SAAC program teacher prior to taking the leadership as assistant manager. |
| Ms. Clark | Ms. Clark is the director of education programs at the SDCC and has been involved in programming at the SDCC since it first opened in 1986. |
| Program Teachers | Description |
| Ms. Jamison | Ms. Jamison was the tap dance teacher during the time this case study was conducted. She has participated in the SAAC program as a teacher in previous years. |
| Mr. Emmanuel | Mr. Emmanuel was the visual arts-murals teacher during the time this case study was conducted. He has participated in the SAAC program as a teacher in previous years. |
| Ms. Kijana | Ms. Kijana was the poetry teacher during the time this case study was conducted. She has participated in the SAAC program as a teacher in previous years. |

Table 1 Continued

| Program Teachers | Description |
|-------------------------|--|
| Ms. Isaac | Ms. Isaac was the early literacy teacher during the time this case study was conducted. She has participated in the SAAC program as a teacher in previous years and both her children and grandchildren have participated in the program. |
| Mr. Malik | Mr. Malik was the podcast and hip-hop music production and recording teacher during the time this case study was conducted. He has participated in the SAAC program as a teacher in previous years. |
| Ms. Morgana | Ms. Morgana was the theater teacher during the time this case study was conducted. This was her first year participating in the SAAC program as a teacher. |
| Ms. Lanita | Ms. Lanita was one of the African dance teachers during the time this case study was conducted. She has participated in the SAAC program as a teacher in previous years. |
| Ms. Pam | Ms. Pam was the special projects teacher during the time this case study was conducted. She has participated in the SAAC program as a teacher in previous years. |
| Ms. Criss | Ms. Criss was the visual arts- mixed media teacher during the time this case study was conducted. This was her first year participating in the SAAC program but has worked with the programming for other youth activities at the SDCC. |
| Mr. Keith | Mr. Keith was the hip-hop dance teacher during the time this case study was conducted. This was his first year participating in the SAAC program as a teacher. |
| Mr. Kendall | Mr. Kendall was the vocal teacher during the time this case study was conducted. This was his first year participating in the SAAC program as a teacher. In the previous year Mr. Kendall worked as an intern during the SAAC program. |
| Ms. Kim | Ms. Kim was one of the African dance teachers during the time this case study was conducted. She has participated in the SAAC program as both a youth participant and a teacher in previous years. Ms. Kim's children also participated in the SAAC program during the time this case study was conducted. |
| Mr. Patrick | Mr. Patrick was the film and media literacy teacher during the time this case study was conducted. He has participated as a teacher in the SAAC program in previous years. Mr. Patrick also grew up at the SDCC as his mother works as the manager. |
| Mama Jendayi | Mama Jendayi was the Rites of Passage (ROP) teacher during the time this case study was conducted. She has participated as a teacher in the SAAC program in previous years. |
| Ms. Alpha | Ms. Alpha is a member of the South Dallas community and volunteers at the SDCC for a number of programs. She works as a community activist and is involved with some youth after-school programs at Dade Middle School. Ms. Alpha's daughter is a former youth participant of the SAAC program and she has a strong relationship with many of the youth and their families in the program. |

Study Importance

This study is important because it adds to the body of research on SJYD's radical healing model. In addition, it moves the field of youth development forward into examining processes of healing instead of examining outcomes. In Chapter II, I will discuss how the community of South Dallas has a long history related to social justice issues. While there are examinations of the effects these issues have on the community at a macro level, there are no studies examining the lived experiences of youth in this community at the micro level. This makes this study important and significant to the community of South Dallas and the institutions and structures that govern the community. Finally, this study is important to Black youth because it counters the large body of research that examines this population through the lens of their pathology or so-called problem behaviors. Despite this body of research, this case study focused on examining the processes involved in a youth program that provides them with a "*healing space of refuge*."

Dissertation Layout

This dissertation will examine the facilitation of the radical healing process at a community cultural center in South Dallas. Utilizing the SJYD's radical healing model as a guide I will explore the ways in which Black youth navigate what I call a "*healing space*" of refuge to combat the oppressive forces that inflict trauma onto their lives hindering their healthy development into adulthood. This chapter 1) provided an

introduction into the SJYD framework and radical healing model, 2) provided an overview of the case study methodology, and 3) explained the importance of the study.

The following chapter, ***Chapter II: The Setting*** will provide an overview of the setting to connect this study to the “*urban conditions*” section of the radical healing model. In this chapter you will find an introduction into the history of the South Dallas and the South Dallas Cultural Center (SDCC), an overview of the relationship the SDCC holds with the community of South Dallas, and the significance of the local middle school to the collective struggle that youth attending the Summer Arts at the Center (SAAC) program (the unit of analysis for this case study) navigate.

Chapter III: Enacting Radical Care for Communal Survival will examine the *care or caring relationships* component of the radical healing model. I will specifically investigate how radical care is enacted as a tool for the well-being of the youth that attend the program. In this chapter you will find an in-depth exploration of the familial relationships established at the space this case study took place, an examination of the ways in which program staff employ resistance to enact radical care, explore the survival tactics used by program staff to enact radical care, and conceptualize the connection between radical care and community well-being.

Chapter IV: Building Critical Consciousness will examine the *critical consciousness* component of the radical healing model. In this chapter I will discuss the concept of critical thinking as it relates to critical consciousness, explore the ways program staff create a culture of critical thinking to build youth’s critical consciousness,

and provide a narrative view of how one young person developed his critical consciousness.

Chapter V: Hip-Hop Education: Cultural Identity Development and Critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy will examine the *culture* component of the radical healing model through the lens of two hip-hop education courses that took place at the program studied. In this chapter I will provide an overview of how youth development frameworks view the development of youth's cultural identity, discuss the connection between SJYD and the critical hip-hop pedagogy framework, provide an overview of the hip-hop education classes at the program, discuss the tools program staff employed to facilitate cultural identity, and speak to the disruptions or barriers to the development of cultural identity for youth attending the program.

Chapter VI: Reframing Healing will explore the *radical healing process as a whole* to provide a critique of the ways in which the field of youth development conceptualizes trauma and healing. In this chapter I will display two vignettes examining the lived experiences of myself and two youth participants in the program to shed light on the importance of reframing how the field of youth development should explore alternative ways of naming the trauma young people experience and their healing process.

This dissertation will conclude with ***Chapter VII: Learning From the SJYD Framework: Summary and Conclusions***, which examines what I learned from the examination the SJYD framework in the field. In this chapter I will conceptualize what a *'healing space of refuge'* is for Black youth, build a connection between the radical

healing concept of **community** and the existence of love within a *healing space of refuge*, provide recommendations for future researchers practitioners, and policy makers, discuss the limitations and implications this case study holds for the field of youth development and social science and humanities research, and provide my final reflections and thoughts in regards to this research. It is with hopes that through these seven chapters the field of youth development begins to place value on the power of the lived experiences of Black youth to achieve social justice.

CHAPTER II

THE SETTING

...It's like you have a ball full of positivity in a world full of negative. Meaning South Dallas being the world and this area, fair park, the schools, the cultural center being the little ball full of positivity.

- Nina Davis, SAAC Teaching Assistant

Introduction

This chapter will 1) provide a historical perspective of the South Dallas community, 2) discuss the importance of the South Dallas Cultural Center (SDCC) in the community, and 3) examine the significance of Dr. Billy Earl Dade Middle School to the lived experiences of the youth that attend the SAAC program. Finally, I will connect the current urban social conditions of South Dallas to the radical healing model. Nina's words in the quote above sheds light on the importance of gaining an understanding of the community that a '*healing space of refuge*' exists in. Through the lens of the lived experiences of the Black community this chapter will explore the setting where this case study was conducted.

History of South Dallas Community

I feel like South Dallas in itself, okay this is a weird comparison, you know how they have a like that one grandmother in every family that's stuck in her ways? I feel like South Dallas is like stuck in its ways with like the gentrification that's going on around it. It's like they don't want the change but the change is good but they know that there's something about the change that's gonna keep them together.

- Nina Davis, SAAC Teaching Assistant

Every morning of this five-week case study I would take Interstate 30 from the city of Fort Worth into the city of Dallas. The exit for 2nd Avenue was my entrance into South Dallas and it led into the State of Texas Fair Park grounds. I would always make a right onto Robert B. Cullum Boulevard and as I drove down Robert B. Cullum I would pass the Pan-African Connection Bookstore, Art Gallery, and Resource Center, a large tan building covered in bolded black West African Adinkra symbols. As I continued driving down Robert B. Cullum I passed Fair Park on my left and gas stations, a McDonalds, Jack in a Box, and Two Podnas Barbecue on my right. Next up was a Bank of America and a Walgreens. After passing that, Irma Lerma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School would be on the left side. Signs indicated that the SDCC would be at the next light on the left displayed in the median of Robert B. Cullum Boulevard. I would then turn on my signal light and make a left onto Fitzhugh Avenue where the South Dallas Cultural Center would be located on the right. After making this journey each morning during the first week of this case study, I realized that South Dallas was more than what I saw on my drive in and with the help of SAAC program staff I learned about the community of South Dallas. This section will explore the history of South Dallas and provide an insight on the current community conditions.

Sunny South Dallas: A Community's History

In 1841, the city of Dallas was founded by John Neely Bryan as a trading post (McElhaney & Hazel, 2010). Eventually Dallas was established as a town in 1856 and later incorporated as a city in 1871 (McElhaney & Hazel, 2010). As a major distribution and trading hub for North Texas, Dallas' population grew tremendously after the Texas

and Pacific Railroad arrived and the trade of cotton and buffalo-hide increased. Between 1870 and 1880 the population of Dallas grew from about 3,000 to 10,385 and by the turn of the 20th century the population of Dallas was at 42,638 (City of Dallas Office of Economic Development, n.d). Once slaves were freed in Texas on June 19, 1865, many of them moved to Dallas and established a number of towns including Freedman's Town in the area downtown currently referred to as the Arts District (Prior & Kemper, 2005) and the Southern Dallas neighborhood of Joppa, pronounced Joppee (City of Dallas Planning and Urban Design, n.d.). The city of Dallas continued to grow in square miles as it annexed towns like East Dallas and Oak Cliff and in 1899 Freedman's Town was now identified as North Dallas to city officials (Prior & Kemper, 2005). By the start of the 20th century African-Americans living in what was now referred to as North Dallas had established a number of businesses, schools, and homes in the area (Prior & Kemper, 2005). As middle and upper class Whites built upscale homes in the northern part of North Dallas, the southern part where the Black community lived became overcrowded as a result of segregation and housing laws (Prior & Kemper, 2005).

Unfortunately, after Black North Dallas community tax payers, physicians, and community leaders petitioned Dallas officials in 1927 for paved streets and sewer lines for the whole community, only a few streets of the southern part of North Dallas were paved and a small number of sewer lines were placed (Dulaney, 1993; Prior & Kemper, 2005). According to Prior and Kemper,

The greatest force working against Dallas African-Americans was segregation, and one of its most serious consequences was overcrowding. With some areas of Dallas maintaining deed restrictions that forbade Whites to sell property to

African- Americans, and with the threat of violence always present, African-Americans were "imprisoned" in segregated communities as their population grew. Overcrowding was accompanied by poverty and deterioration (2005, p. 186).

Not only did overcrowding affect housing within North Dallas, it also posed problems at the local segregated Black high school, Booker T. Washington. The school was designed for 600 students but by 1930 nearly 1,664 students were enrolled (Dulaney, 1993). The overcrowding due to segregation had an effect on the image of the City of Dallas, based on reports by city officials, and it eventually led to the decision to build a public housing complex and establish the Dallas Housing Authority (DHA). In 1938, the DHA surveyed areas of North Dallas to determine where the new public housing complex would be built and they selected the poorest area of the southern part of North Dallas (Prior & Kemper, 2005). The building of the new public housing complex held many implications. Some Blacks would be able to live in the new public housing complex but many others were displaced from their homes and found housing in other parts of the city including South Dallas and Oak Cliff (Prior & Kemper, 2005).

During this period of time South Dallas was a community of mostly working and middle class Whites. Many of the affluent, upper class Whites that previously lived in South Dallas had moved to northern Dallas suburbs. As they move out the working and middle class Whites moved in and maintained the northern part of South Dallas (Dulaney, 1993). Some Blacks lived in the southern part of South Dallas in the late 1940's and this began the major divide of the White neighborhoods of South Dallas from the Black neighborhoods (Dulaney, 1993). However, in the 1950's middle and upper

class Black families began to move into White neighborhoods in South Dallas and they were met with a great deal of resistance. In *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door: Racial Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods* Meyer (2001) writes,

The African American population grew more modestly during the same period. In 1950 and 1951, however, the city embarked on a slum clearance venture and new construction of Love Field, the city airport. The projects caused the displacement of many African Americans living in West Dallas who sought relief in the older white sections of South Dallas. As blacks began moving onto blocks on the frontiers of the African American enclaves, the resident whites, like their counterparts a decade earlier, began a reign of terror. By July 1951, eleven bombings had been reported in the district; six more incidents involving “mysterious fires” had also occurred. After the eleventh bombing, the city established a special grand jury to run the investigation. With the aid of the FBI and Texas Rangers, local police questioned a number of suspects, and in late summer 1951 the grand jury brought nearly a dozen indictments. Most of the vigilantes hailed from blocks on which the violence occurred (p. 112).

The bombings of Black homes in South Dallas in the 1950's continued until a group of White residents and a Mexican American resident were indicted but eventually found not guilty (Meyers, 2001). Around the time of the trial, the city of Dallas received federal funding to 1) begin the process of annexing West Dallas, 2) protect the area from flooding by building levees and dams, and 3) build public and private housing for Black Dallas residents (Meyers, 2001). As a result of Blacks moving into South Dallas, White residents moved out and into Northern Dallas suburbs (Meyers, 2001). Table 2 provides the population changes between 1940 and 1960 in South Dallas.

Table 2: Population South Dallas Census Tract (1940 to 1960)

| Year | Total Population | Black Population | White Population |
|------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1940 | 14,632 | 0 | 14,632 |
| 1950 | 25,159 | 13,567 | 11,592 |
| 1960 | 27,607 | 27,142 | 465 |

Adapted from Meyers (2001)

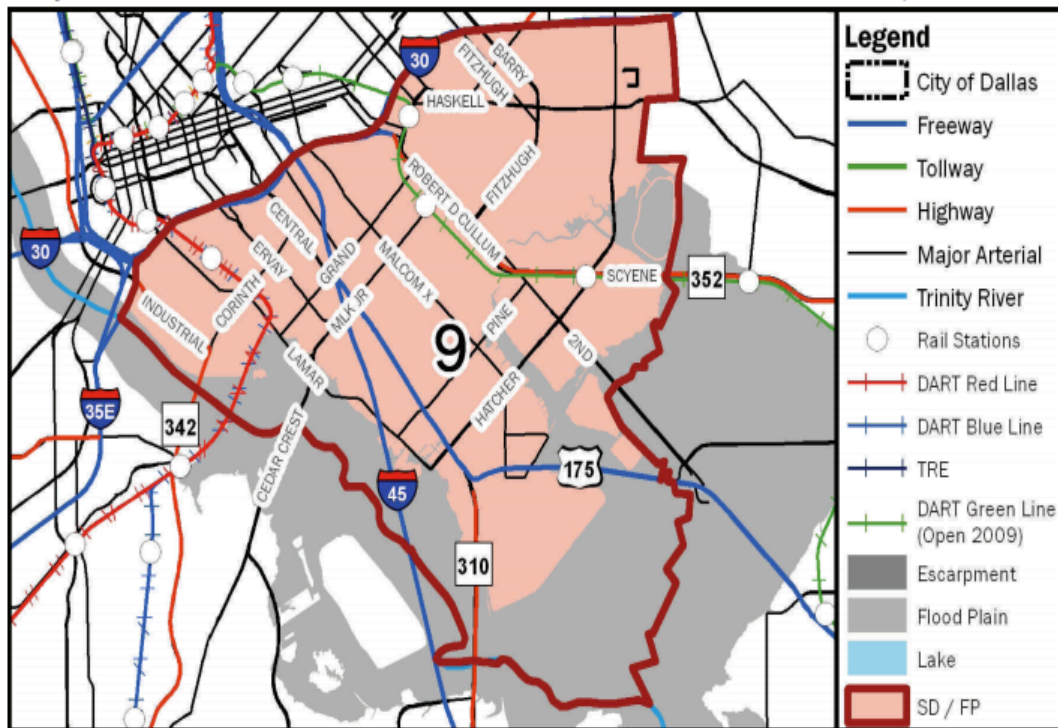
South Dallas continued to thrive as more Black residents moved in. Civil rights groups like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) all had Dallas chapters and their members organized throughout the 1950's, 1960's, and 1970's to create more equitable access to housing, businesses, and schools throughout the Dallas area, including South Dallas (Dulaney, 1993). Into the 1980's, 1990's, and first decade of 2000, South Dallas experienced what is referred to as "Black flight." A number of middle class Black residents left South Dallas to move to newer homes in Dallas county suburbs like Mansfield, Duncanville, and Cedar Hill (Meyers, 2001). This Black flight left South Dallas as a community full of opportunity where several poor and elderly residents live around abandoned, demolished, and neglected homes and buildings.

Sunny South Dallas: Current Conditions

The current community of South Dallas, located south of downtown Dallas and across from Interstate 30, is referred to as South Dallas/Fair Park by city developers and officials. According to the city of Dallas Office of Economic Development (2008), the population of South Dallas is around 35,537 and it covers 12.76 square miles. The

location of South Dallas is contested between city officials and the residents that live there. Many current South Dallas residents and individuals that grew up in the area consider South Dallas to include the neighborhoods around the Fair Park grounds. Some of these neighborhoods include Mill City Neighborhood, Ideal Neighborhood, Wheatley Place Historic District, South Boulevard, and Park Row Historic District. Figure 7 below provides a map of what the Dallas Office of Economic Development considers to be the South Dallas/Fair Park neighborhood (2008).

Figure 7: Map of South Dallas/Fair Park



Retrieved from: City of Dallas Office of Economic Development (2008)

Although South Dallas or what many of the residents call the “Sunny South” seems full of dilapidated buildings and boarded up homes, many residents have strong community

ties and are working with community development organizations to improve community conditions. Even the Dallas mayor's office has an initiative called *Grow South* created to assist with the development of the entire Southern portion of Dallas, including South Dallas/Fair Park area (City of Dallas Grow South, 2016). The *Innercity Community Development Corporation (ICDC)* is a non-profit housing development organization through the City of Dallas created with the purpose of revitalizing the South Dallas/Fair Park area (Innercity Community Development Corporation, 2016). ICDC, led by former city council member Diane Ragsdale, has been building new homes and neighborhoods in South Dallas since it was established in 1986 (Innercity Community Development Corporation, 2016). In addition, a coalition called *Revitalize South Dallas* has been working with businesses, neighborhood associations, churches, and community members to push for economic development and the revitalization of South Dallas (Revitalize South Dallas Coalition, 2016).

Despite the efforts of neighborhood, community, and city organizations working towards improving the conditions in South Dallas, demographic and socioeconomic data shows slow progress. Revisiting the radical healing model is significant here because the demographic and socioeconomic data of the South Dallas community connect to the structural social toxins referenced in the radical healing model that black youth experience. For example, there has been a significant decrease in the population of South Dallas. In 1970 this community held a population of 71,988 but decreased to 50, 821 in 1980 (Johnson, 1986). The population in 1980 is much higher than the current population of 35, 537 (City of Dallas Office of Economic Development, 2008).

This decrease in population directly effects the lives of children and youth in the community because it is connected to the closing of schools in South Dallas. Dallas Independent School District (DISD) closed four local elementary and middle schools between 2011 and 2015 (Haag, 2011; Duekhart, 2012). This lack of access to neighborhood schools causes many families to leave the South Dallas community and move to other areas of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex where their children can attend schools in their local neighborhoods.

Income is another factor or social condition affecting the conditions in South Dallas. In 1980 the average income for a South Dallas family was \$9,180 (Johnson, 1986). Currently, the City of Dallas Office of Economic Development (2008) reports that majority households in the South Dallas area have an income below \$30,000. With the poverty threshold at \$6, 635 in 1980 and \$24, 250 in 2009 (Census Bureau, 1980/2009), it is clear that income levels have decreased in the South Dallas community. In addition to this, only 59% of South Dallas residents hold a high school diploma and there is an unemployment rate of 16.5% with less than 1% of jobs in the city of Dallas located in the community (Working in Neighborhoods Strategically (WINS) Dallas, 2015).

This data makes it clear that many of the youth living in South Dallas are enduring the structural social conditions of poverty outlined in the radical healing model under structural social toxins. Although the progress to improve the conditions in South Dallas is slow, the likelihood of it increase in speed is high. As a result, the following

section provides a critical look into gentrification in the South Dallas community and how participants of this case study attempt to handle this issue.

Gentrification

Presently, community development is integral to the success of South Dallas but many residents fear gentrification. In the simplest terms gentrification refers

the process by which poor and working-class neighborhoods in the inner city are refurbished via an influx of private capital and middle-class homebuyers and renters— neighborhoods that had previously experienced disinvestment and a middle-class exodus (Smith, 1996, p. 30).

The South Dallas area has not fully experienced gentrification but there are many signs that lead one to draw the conclusion that it could happen. The social conditions of South Dallas discussed in the section above show that South Dallas provides an almost perfect set of conditions for gentrification to occur. The lack of businesses, schools, and decrease in population leaves South Dallas with many vacant properties and homes. While community members are working to revitalize South Dallas, the chances of outside developers coming in and gentrifying the area is likely. If South Dallas becomes gentrified, which will consist of the removal of the current majority low-income Black residents, it may end up turning into a middle and upper class neighborhood for individuals and families that want to live within ten minutes of downtown Dallas and minutes away from the Fair Park grounds. Although spaces like the South Dallas Cultural Center (SDCC) are owned by the City of Dallas, they are still vulnerable to being sold by the city to private developers. The staff and some of the youth at the SDCC are well aware of these issues and openly discussed them in their interviews.

The quote that opened this section sheds light on the ways in which Nina Davis, a youth participant, envisions the South Dallas community. Nina realizes the age of South Dallas by identifying it as a grandmother and with that age comes a great deal of wisdom. When Nina mentions the gentrification that is happening around South Dallas, she is referring to the gentrification that is taking place in a neighboring community of Oak Cliff where parts of the community has now been renamed as the Bishop Arts District. Nina views the gentrification as a change that she considers to be good but recognizes that the South Dallas community is resisting the change in some way. Nina's personification is significant because it highlights the connection that she has with the South Dallas community, she recognizes her as a grandmother but wants her grandmother to be open to changes. Patrick, the SAAC program Film Teacher and South Dallas resident, expressed his views on the gentrification of South Dallas.

...So the community at large understands that. They understand that the city sees them as lesser than. They understand because they're, you know, everything they have has been stripped away systematically, now it's down to the schools. And they act like they're stupid, like you people haven't been here since the 60s, like they know you're about to gentrify them, that's how they got here. You kicked the Jews out and the white folk went to move where the Jews lived. So we moved in, made it look nice and we stayed. What happened was, we stayed and it got good. We stayed and it became an entertainment center, it became all that shit. And I mean you can look at it through the history book."

- Patrick

Patrick recognizes the power dynamics that exist between the community of South Dallas and the city of Dallas community and economic development officials. As a result of the power the city of Dallas has held and continues to hold over South Dallas, community members like Patrick recognize the process the city is taking to develop and sell the community to upper and middle class individuals in Dallas. Since South Dallas is

only a couple of miles from the heart of downtown, many developers are eyeing it as a huge investment.

The topic of gentrification emerged as a theme associated with the radical healing model component of community. During an interview and discussion with me, Ms. Vicki recognized that both the city of Dallas and Dallas Independent School District (DISD) were implementing a strategic process to push out current South Dallas residents by closing local South Dallas elementary and middle schools and busing the children and youth to schools outside of their community. A further discussion of this strategic process will be discussed later in this chapter but youth participants, like Nina, and SAAC teachers, like Patrick, share Ms. Vicki's suspicions of gentrification. The radical healing model promotes the importance of youth feeling that they have a sense of community and the community of South Dallas is working hard with city officials and local non-profits to provide that sense of community for South Dallas youth. One of the ways this is done is through the South Dallas Cultural Center (SDCC) Summer Arts at the Center (SAAC) program.

The South Dallas Cultural Center (SDCC)

The South Dallas Cultural Center: Where the Black Experience is More Than Just a Slogan

- Ms. Vicki, SDCC Manager

History of the South Dallas Cultural Center

The South Dallas Cultural Center (SDCC) opened in 1986 under the City Arts Program, a division of the City of Dallas Parks and Recreation Department (City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, 2010). Three years following the opening of the SDCC, the Dallas City Council voted to create the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs (City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, 2010). Since 1989 the SDCC has operated through the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs. Artist Thornton and Elaine Thornton, who were prominent artists in Dallas, forged the founding of the SDCC (Martine, n.d.). Artist, Elaine, and other community organizers spent a great deal of time through the 1970's and 1980's lobbying city officials, getting petitions signed, and rallying community support to build a cultural center for Black arts groups in Dallas to have their own space and express their culture (Martine, n.d.). One of the SDCC staff, Ms. Clark, expressed how the idea for the SDCC came to fruition with the help of a 1.5-million-dollar bond through the City of Dallas Parks and Recreation Department (Martine, n.d.).

So, because I have lived in South Dallas since 1980, actually living here, there have always been a number of activists who have wanted a cultural center from the mid-'60s through the '70s, organizations who have said it's not enough for us to demand better services and freedom. We need an institution to change their minds, to talk about, you know, the black is a beautiful culture, all of that black arts movement kind of stuff that was going on. But these were people like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee actually had a formal declaration, quote, "We need a black arts center." They didn't say, this space, but we needed a black arts center in South Dallas. For—and all these groups were going down to the city council et cetera, lobbying. And then late in the '81 or '82, a guy named Art Thornton who was a returning Vietnam vet, and some other artists started more traditional organizing of going to the council, talking to the Parks Department because this Arts was under the Parks Department initially...And so,

through their efforts and the community's efforts about 2 million dollars was part of a bond package, to buy the land and to construct a 24,000 square foot facility.
- Ms. Clark

Through the lobbying and support of city council members like Diane Ragsdale, the Parks and Recreation Department broke ground at the corner of Robert B. Cullum Boulevard and South Fitzhugh Avenue for the South Dallas Cultural Center in 1985 (Martine, n.d.). The SDCC finally opened in June of 1986 and it has been considered a staple among Black artist in the Dallas area ever since (Martine, n.d.). The SDCC includes a black-box theater, a visual arts gallery, dance studios, a ceramic studio, a printmaking studio, and a photography studio.

The mission of the South Dallas Cultural Center is to present excellent cultural programs reflecting the contributions of Africa to world culture. Upon its opening there were a number of arts programs held at the SDCC but the longest existing program was created by Ms. Clark called, *Black Cinematheque Dallas*. This film program provides opportunities for families to view documentaries, features, shorts, animation, and experimental films by African American independent filmmakers as well as filmmakers from the African Diaspora. During her interview Ms. Clark reflected on the relationship between *Black Cinematheque Dallas* and the SDCC.

The facility opened and the first director Pat Johnson was hired. She came from Chicago via San Diego, and was brought to be the first director. And so, I just kind of came over to, you know, hang with her and to see what was going on and to try to give her guidance and direction and find out exactly what was happening here, because this was for South Dallas and how people could participate and you know, just hanging, whatever. So, from since that time, I went on to do programming here in 1986. I started Black Cinematheque, was in 1985. Same period in the 80 years was our organization, to screen independent black film. And all through that time, from the birth, it was just kind of a number of us have different things that we used to be guardians of...So, since I was

hanging over here and been here, Mrs. Catherine Gilliam, who was the first African-American on the school board to say, "Well Marilyn, why don't you take responsibility for the cultural center and keeping them involved and letting us know what's happening over there, because we don't know." And so I did. So, you know, we just said, had this little thing that promises had been made, meaning people who did stuff before us. And so, we have to, to whatever degree we can, maintain that we know its dynamic, forever changing, but that we still have to stay connected. So, that was officially just being here, guarding it, using it, trying to keep it connected to the larger, defending it, letting folks know.

- Ms. Clark

As a South Dallas community member who was given the role of guardian of the SDCC, Ms. Clark had spent a significant amount of time programming and serving as an unofficial community liaison since the center opened in 1986. Although the SDCC was opened in 1986, Ms. Clark also mentioned during her interview that previous SDCC managers did not place a focus on serving the surrounding South Dallas community and it was not until Ms. Vicki arrived in 1997 that the SDCC truly had an initiative that catered to South Dallas youth. When Ms. Vicki began her tenure as the SDCC manager, she was intentional in making sure that only children and youth that lived in South Dallas could attend the SAAC program.

In 2005, the SDCC had been open and in use for almost twenty years and was closed to receive a renovation and expansion. In 2007, the new facility opened and included an additional 10,000 square feet, a 120 seat black-box theater, a new visual arts gallery, and studios for dance, two-dimensional arts, fiber, media arts, printmaking, and photography. It also upgraded to a full service digital recording studio and a new library. The SDCC is now considered a primary community resource for African centered education in South Dallas and throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex.

SDCC Programs

The SDCC holds a number of events, programs, festivals, classes, and conferences throughout the year. Some of the SDCC's signature programs include Soul Rep Theatre Youth Classes. Soul Rep Theatre is one of the SDCC's resident theatre companies that present plays on the African Diaspora experience by African Diaspora playwrights and authors. Sometimes the SDCC holds what they call "an evening of spoken word" where local slam poets and spoken word artist are invited to present their poetry. Film, dance, and music festivals are also a signature at the SDCC and local and international Black artist use the SDCC as a space to exhibit their art in the Arthello Beck Gallery and the Emerging Artist Gallery. Every weekend and on some weeknights the resident dance company holds practice and performances. The SDCC even holds capoeira classes, a martial art and dance form originated from African slaves in Brazil, for local Dallas youth. From films festivals to art exhibitions and capoeira classes, the SDCC lives up to their popular saying "The South Dallas Cultural Center: Where the Black Experience is More Than Just a Slogan." The focus on the culture and arts of the African Diaspora is at the center of all the programming and events held at the SDCC but most importantly, it is a cultural center that promotes and works to build community. One of the most popular and significant ways the SDCC promotes and builds community with South Dallas residents is through their annual Summer Arts at the Center (SAAC) program.

Summer Arts at the Center (SAAC) Program

Program Description

The SDCC holds a youth summer program every year called Summer Arts at the Center (SAAC). The SAAC program is a 5-week arts institute for South Dallas youth between the ages of five and seventeen years old. The SAAC program takes a multi-disciplinary approach to teach African Diaspora history through the use of the arts as a tool for learning and development. Beginning in 1997 Ms. Vicki, the SDCC manager, intentionally only opened the SAAC program to South Dallas youth residents. The SAAC program works with both youth and their parents to expand their knowledge on African Diasporic history. Youth that attend the program are taken through a seven-year cycle of immersion into the history of the African Diaspora through the exploration of a multitude of art forms. According to the SAAC program curriculum the seven year cycle teaches 1) the progressive history of the Black experience with each era exploring the society, culture, names, and greats works of art and 2) the use of art as a medium to learn about and carry on a rich cultural history. Every seven years youth participants that attend the SAAC program go through the following cycles:

- Cycle 1: West Africa: The Heartbeat (A Study of Ancient Pre-colonial Africa)
- Cycle 2: The Middle Passage (Starting in the 1400's)
- Cycle 3: African Gateway Communities (1669 to 1865)
- Cycle 4: Africanisms in the Arts of the Harlem Renaissance (1911-1940)
- Cycle 5: Civil Rights/Black Arts Movement (Civil Rights- late 1940's Black Arts- mid 1960's)
- Cycle 6: Africanisms- Our History Inspires Us (19th -20th Century)
- Cycle 7: Africa Now (Postcolonial Central, West, and East Africa from 1960-present)

The hope of the SDCC staff is that the children and youth enrolled in the SAAC program will come back every summer for seven years or more. After they have completed all seven years of the cycle, youth are invited to participate in the culminating activity, a fifteen-day trip to either Senegal West Africa or selected cities in the African Gateway Communities (Brazil, Cuba, West Indies, etc). This trip involves a series of cultural classes, field trips and language lessons. This case study was conducted during the seventh year of the cycle where the theme or area of study was “Africa Now: A Trip to Modern Day Senegal.”

Program Outcomes

The creator of the SAAC program, Ms. Vicki, expresses what outcomes she looks for in the SAAC program.

Well there are several actually, needless to say I'm first and foremost interested in children of African descent learning their history and understanding their part in that continuum. So it's one, getting them to know the history but two, to get them to be the guardians of the history because we stress to them that you have to be the people who make sure that this history does not die. I mean we know that if we can keep that kid from the time they start in school till the time they leave school we have a very good chance of making sure that that is a child we are putting out in the world with four to five skills in terms of their knowledge of history, their knowledge of self, their understanding of community, their understanding of social justice. You know all of those things. We know that is what happens.

- Ms. Vicki

Based on Ms. Vicki's response above, I have provided a list of the SAAC program outcomes below:

- Knowledge of History
- Knowledge of Self
- Understanding of Community
- Understanding of Social Justice

As outlined in Chapter I, these outcomes are closely connected to the radical model and the SJYD framework. In addition to these outcomes, Harold, the assistant program manager at the SDCC, expressed how he felt that one of the most important outcomes of the SAAC program was related to love of self.

I think any—the main thing a love of self, right, which comes from knowing self, you know. I think we present them with a lot of information hoping that they will grasp on to some of it. So really I think just early engagement with arts and culture, and some encouragement to apply it to whatever. They don't all become artists. They don't all become cultural workers. But they have a ground and then a foundation in arts and culture.

- Harold

The ways in which self-love and the other four outcomes listed above are achieved is mostly through the SAAC program activities. Harold mentioned that what is tied to the self-love is “*to see them become advocates for their own lives and their own like liberation and ideas and complete agency.*” These outcomes make it clear that they want youth in the SAAC program to feel a sense of power, liberation, and agency to become advocates and activist for their lives and community and outcomes are achieved through a number of program activities.

Program Activities

The activities that take place at the SAAC program range from early literacy class, where five and six year olds in the program work on their reading and literacy skills to podcast class, where thirteen and fourteen year old youth learn how to record and produce their own podcasts. Table 3, on page 66 and 67, provides a glimpse of some program activities (not in any particular order) that took place while this case study was conducted in addition to activities that took place in previous years. Based on site observations and interviews with SAAC youth and program teachers, I developed descriptions for each activity to provide a brief glance into the SAAC program activities.

Table 3: Selected SAAC Program Activities and Descriptions

| Program Activity | Activity Description |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Poetry | Poetry activities engaged youth to connect their lived experiences to the history topics they were learning about each summer. At the end of each summer, the teen group compile all the poetry they wrote throughout the summer and publish a book that is sold on amazon.com |
| Rites of Passage | Rites of Passage is a class for the teen group that provides youth with opportunities for personal development related to developing their sense of self through an understanding of the history of African and African American culture. During this class youth have discussions about African and African American popular culture, history, and values. |
| Hip-Hop Dance | Hip-hop dance is a class where youth learn about the history of hip-hop culture in the U.S. and throughout the African diaspora. In addition to this, youth also learn hip-hop dance skills including how to choreograph their own hip-hop dance. |
| Hip-Hop Music Production | Hip-hop music production is a class where youth learn about the history of the art form of music sampling with a focus on how hip-hop producers sample music. Youth gain skills in operating music production software, like Garage Band, and a beat machine. |
| Podcast | Podcast activities consist of youth selecting a topic for their podcast by pulling from current events and social issues. Based on this topic, youth formulate focused thoughts and ideas related to the current even or social issue and record their podcast as they share their thoughts and ideas with each other. Youth gain critical thinking and public speaking skills. |
| Tap Dance | Tap dance activities consist of youth learning about the history of tap dance and how it relates to the current area of study. Youth gain skills in rhythm, improvisation, and the creation and use of movement. |
| Senegalese Cooking | Senegalese cooking consists of youth learning about popular local dishes in Senegal and how to prepare them. During this class youth made popular local cuisine in Senegal like Yassa, Thiéboudienne, Maafe, and Bissap. |
| Theater | Theater class consists of youth learning improvisation techniques, staging, and script writing. Theater instructors use <i>theater of the oppressed</i> curriculum to assist youth in connecting performance to social issues. Theater class provides youth with opportunities to implement creative theater techniques like street theater to engage with their community about social issues. |
| African Dance | African dance is a class where youth learn historic and modern dances from around the African Diaspora. The African dance instructors make sure that youth learn about the meanings behind each dance they perform and their significance to the diaspora. |

Table 3 Continued

| Program Activity | Activity Description |
|------------------------------|--|
| Early Literacy | Early literacy is a class designated for first and second grade children enrolled in the SAAC program. This class provides opportunities for children to develop and enhance their literacy skills by sounding out words and letters and connecting them to images. |
| Storytelling | Storytelling is a class designated for first and second grade children enrolled in the SAAC program. This class utilizes the art of storytelling to teach children about the history and culture of African and African American people. Each story provides positive images of African people and culture to promote self-love. |
| Visual Arts- Murals | Visual Arts- Murals activities consist of youth applying knowledge about their history by creating murals. Youth create murals that are based on the area of study for that particular summer. The murals are painted on the walls and even the floors of the SDCC, truly making it an inviting space for children and youth. |
| Film Viewing | Film viewing activities consist of children and youth viewing and discussing African centered films. Some films viewed at the SAAC program are related to African and African American history and culture while others deal more with life lessons. After each film viewing, film teachers hold a discussion to process and debrief about topics and themes covered in each film. |
| Film Production | Film production class consist of youth learning how to develop a story, write a script, assign roles, record a film, and produce a film. This class gives youth the opportunity to use their voice and knowledge to create a short film about the area of study for the summer. |
| Swimming | Swimming activities consist of children and youth receiving swimming lessons from certified Life Guards at their local community YMCA. This activity develops swimming skills among children and youth to prevent instances of drowning in the South Dallas community. |
| Skating | Skating activities consist of youth walking to the local skating rink adjacent to the SDCC. At this skating rink youth have fun as they skate and dance to popular songs. |
| Lunch with the Elders | Lunch with the elders consists of youth having lunch and discussions with elders in the Dallas community about history and social justice issues. |
| Field Trips | Field trip activities consist of youth traveling to local community businesses and organizations like the Dallas Museum of Art, African American Museum, Fair Park, Freedman's Cemetery, and the Islamic Center of Irving, Youth have also traveled to a farm in Commerce, Texas and Senegal, West Africa. |
| Morning Ritual | The morning ritual activity consist of children, youth, and teachers gathering each morning to prepare for the day by stretching, doing vocal exercises, and singing collective songs like the Negro National Anthem. |

Community Relationships with the South Dallas Cultural Center

So, yeah, the perception, for people who live here, is that, I love South Dallas. I don't know why I love it, but the sense of why you love it in many ways is the sense of community, when you can experience it. 'Because a lot of the working class and middle class people have moved, because of lack of housing, the closing of schools. We know all of this is for the preparation of gentrification of developers, coming to take this last stand, where poor people live.

- Ms. Clark, Educational Director

The SDCC makes all attempts to continuously establish community connections by building strong relationships with parents of the youth that enroll in programs, community members, and local businesses and organizations. This section will provide insight into what these community relationships look like and how SDCC staff establish and maintain them.

Relationships with Parents

So I like the kids and this is what I'm finding out about Vickie's program. The parents are involved. It's about if the parents are vested in it and they know you're vested in their children this is the best—I've been working summer programs for 20, no, I taught for 35 years, for 35 years I've been working, this is the best program I've worked.

- Florence, Visual Arts/Mixed Media Teacher

Parents and families are extremely important to the SDCC staff and the SAAC program teachers. Throughout this section I will use the term parents to indicate a young person's biological parent or guardian because many of the youth enrolled in the SAAC program are in the care of their grandparents and other family members. There are a number of ways that the SAAC program invests in parents and families and this investment begins with the goals of the program. Ms. Vicki expressed the importance of

ensuring that parents had the skills to advocate for their children in educational settings like schools.

And then we also have goals for our families because we don't just deal with the child, we deal with the whole family. And so we want our parents to be aware of their power and you know that they can advocate for their children in education and in any other area that they feel needs to be addressed.

- Ms. Vicki

Ms. Vicki and other program staff are always asking parents how they are doing and how members of their family are doing in order to get an insight on any issues they may be facing and based on that insight they provide assistance in any way they can to combat these issues. As it relates to the education system, program staff like Ms. Vicki, Ms. Clark, and Harold attend school board and city council meetings to advocate for the children, youth, and families in the South Dallas community. As a result of Ms. Vicki insisting that the SAAC program take care of the whole family unit, teachers like Kijana focus in on parents as well as the youth in her class.

And a lot of people have a tendency to want to say "Forget the adults, let's focus on the children." I personally think it's a collective, I think that we need to work with parents and children, because parents are still hurting from everything they experienced as a child and what's happening is it's getting perpetuated, it's passed down to the next generation, and the next generation and so on so forth. It's up to us to break the cycle.

- Kijana

Breaking cycles by incorporating parents into program activities is one significant way that the SAAC program builds relationships with parents. For example, each year the SAAC program holds a family field trip to the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA). All family members are invited on this field trip including grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles, cousins, and even family friends. The DMA pays for buses to transport all the

families from the SDCC to the DMA and back. While conducting this case study, I attended this field trip and nearly every parent attended this field trip. This sheds light on the fact that parents feel included and supported through the SDCC.

As the SDCC staff provides support to parents, they expect that support in return. Ms. Vicki expresses the importance of parents giving back to the program during her interview.

Well the first thing of course is that because this program is free to South Dallas parents, your pay back is you come and help us, you know. And usually once they get involved, they want to be involved... You know, because if there's very few places out in the community where they get support and, you know, affirmation and we believe in rewarding our parents with all kinds of little things... So, we believe in that, we believe in giving them whatever, free lunches, sometimes we'll take them out to dinner, whatever we have to do. Because we don't have a lot of money so you know we can't be giving them cars, pink Cadillac's. Anyway, but they know that we respect them and that we see them as a partner in this work. And I think that's really what keeps them tied to us, you know, is that it's a mutual respect and that we, even when they are in trouble, we don't abandon them.

- Ms. Vicki

Partnership, support, and affirmation is what the SDCC program staff and SAAC teachers make all attempts to provide to parents because they recognize the importance of each young person's family unit. SDCC staff recognize that if a family is having trouble or facing an issue, the young people they serve will be affected. As a result, they do everything that they can to ensure the well-being of both the children and youth in the program and their families. In addition to this, the SDCC program also works diligently to build relationship with and invest in community members that may not necessarily have a child enrolled in the SAAC program.

Relationship with Community Members

You gotta keep your ears to the streets, Ms. Aishia.

- Harold, Assistant Program Manager

Members of the South Dallas community consider the SDCC to be a staple in the community and this has to do with the fact that the SDCC makes a great deal of effort to stay involved by incorporating community members into events, festivals, and program activities that happen at the SDCC. When asked about the relationship between the SDCC and the South Dallas community, Ms. Vicki responded, “*we also obviously are very involved in the greater South Dallas community, because we don’t see ourselves as being this little oasis.*” When Ms. Vicki claims that the SDCC is not considered an oasis she is addressing the fact that the SDCC refutes or pushes back against the idea that the space is only for artist. The SDCC truly embraces the community of South Dallas and this is displayed through actions like providing meeting space for South Dallas community and neighborhood organizations.

SDCC facilities are used for more than just culture and art, it also provides a space for community members to get registered to vote, conduct research in the Gwendolyn Brooks library, and even drop in to celebrate the resignation of the Dallas Independent School District Superintendent (Armstrong, 2015). SDCC also lends a helping hand to community members that work as teachers for the SAAC program. For example, during the time this case study was conducted the visual arts/mixed media teacher was recovering from a stroke and could not drive herself to the program. On

most days she would take the local bus to get to the SDCC but there were some occasions where I observed Ms. Vicki or Harold get in their vehicles and go pick her up.

These little gestures, like holding a neighborhood association meeting at the SDCC or giving community members rides to and from places they need to go, truly builds relationships with local community members. These positive relationships between the SDCC and community members are reciprocal because community members protect and respect the SDCC. The SDCC is located in an area where many buildings are tagged with graffiti and subject to burglaries but Ms. Vicki states, “*I’ve found it to be a very supportive community of the things that are positive, you know like you have seen the building. We have never had any graffiti on this building ever.*” The relationships between the SDCC and South Dallas community members is rooted in support exhibited through the protection and respect that the SDCC staff hold for community members.

Relationship with Community Partners

The SDCC maintain a number of partnerships with local schools, organizations, and community centers and this is due to the fact that program staff views themselves as a part of the greater cultural community of Dallas. According to Ms. Vicki,

We also are a part of the greater cultural community from the stand point of the facility, you know like if people need to come here and meet about something we are always willing, because we want people to see what’s happening in here. We know that most of them have never really been to South Dallas and don’t know what goes on in South Dallas and have the same media distortions that many people do. And when they get in here and see what’s going on with these kids and we are having them like “oh wow, you know, this is a whole different situation over here,” you know, so that’s why we’re so willing to collaborate and to be a part of that greater cultural discussion, even though half the time it bores us to tears.

- Ms. Vicki

As an entity of the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, the SDCC partners with and supports the other cultural centers in the Dallas area like the Oak Cliff Cultural Center and the Latino Cultural Center. The SDCC also holds a strong relationship with the largest arts education funding organization in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex, *Big Thought/Thriving Minds*. This organization is invested in arts education for children and youth and provides a great deal of funding for the SAAC program each summer.

The SDCC also partners with local South Dallas Middle Schools like Billy Earl Dade and Pearl C. Anderson by providing trainings to teachers and opportunities for students to engage with culture and the arts throughout the city of Dallas. Pearl C. Anderson Middle School, which is no longer open, held a strong community partnership with the SDCC and a former Pearl C. Anderson teacher, Ms. Criss, who worked as the visual arts/mixed media teacher at the SAAC program recalled the relationship her students had with the SDCC.

Pearl C. I'd bring my kids, we'd get on the van and we'd come over here. I'm a 2D person. Vickie is a 3D person. I wanted them to get the 3D and so we'd come over here. I'd bring my class, my advanced class.

- Ms. Criss

Ms. Criss also reflected on the collaborations that the SDCC would do with the teachers and students at Pearl C. Anderson Middle School before it closed down.

So it's got to be that and she's become a friend, because I've worked with her through my students and asked her to help judge competitions and look at this and do that. And she formed a bond with the teachers in South Dallas, the art teachers, by coming to our schools and letting us know and doing workshops for us just us, because we were in reading workshops, in math workshops, and we're artists. So she would setup something for all the fine arts and the drama teacher would do a little mini play with us and the music people would come up with a music something and she put it on a disc and then the art teachers would design it. So it was a collaborative thing that she would do to let us know we can do that

with our kids. So she's kind of built that up and helped establish us in the community.

- Ms. Criss

The youth that attend Billy Earl Dade Middle School in South Dallas are always invited over to the SDCC after school to do activities like paint murals and learn more about visual arts. Ms. Vicki works with teachers and administrators at Dade Middle School to develop partnerships with the local schools.

Local community partnerships also exist between the SDCC and the other local community centers in South Dallas. Places like the African American Museum, Juanita Craft Recreation Center, and the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center (MLK Center) have all partnered with the SDCC for local community events and programs. Former youth participant and current African Dance Teacher, Kim, reflected on the ways in which she remembers the SDCC partnering with the MLK Center for the annual Harambee festival that happens every year in South Dallas.

Even during the Harambee Festivals, we would, we would get up and say our poems and we would rally the community and come together and just—to have a ten year old on the mike talking about we need to clean up the streets, that's something big, that's something major.

- Kim

These community partnerships are more than just supporting one another, it involves using the tools that they have to bring the community together and advocate for community change. SDCC staff use their position as a local community organization to advocate for an end to the oppression that occurs in their community. The following section will provide insight on how the SDCC staff are not afraid to involve themselves

in the politics of the local school district to advocate change in the conditions South Dallas children, youth, and families experience.

Significance of Billy Earl Dade Middle School

Billy Earl Dade Middle School is currently the only middle school located in South Dallas. Dade Middle School is significant to this case study because 1) many of the youth that attend the SAAC program currently attend or will attend Dade Middle School in the future and 2) the SDCC is invested in building a strong partnership with Dade Middle School. This section will provide background on Dade Middle School and examine the issue of school closings within South Dallas through the lens of the SJYD framework.

Dr. Billy Earl Dade Middle School

Education opens the door to opportunity

- Dr. Billy Earl Dade

Recently built in 2013, Dade Middle School is located on Grand Avenue in South Dallas and boasts an enrollment of almost 900 students. Dade Middle School is named after a prominent Texas educator, Dr. Billy Earl Dade, who worked as a teacher, principal, and administrator for multiple schools in Dallas Independent School District and even as an adjunct professor at El Centro College, Bishop College, Prairie View A&M University, and Paul Quinn College. Dr. Dade's dedication to education is represented in the architecture of the middle school. The opening quote of this section, "Education opens the door to opportunity" was one motto that Dr. Dade created,

believed, and upheld throughout his tenure as an educator. This motto was so popular that the word “OPPORTUNITY” is engraved into the tile floor as you walk through the front entrance of Dade Middle School. While the focus of Dade Middle School is to provide opportunity, there are number of barriers to opportunity for the students.

I visited Dade Middle School while conducting this case study and although it was summer and the school was closed for maintenance, a community activist, Alpha Thomas was able to arrange a visit and tour. As I walked through the main entrance Ms. Alpha told me about Dr. Dade’s motto and the engraved wording at the entrance on the tile floor. I not only noticed the word opportunity engraved in the tile floor, I also noticed that at the end of the word opportunity was another set of entrance doors with metal detectors in front of them. While it is a norm to see metal detectors in urban or inner city schools, the visual of the engraved word “OPPORTUNITY” leading to a metal detector was significant and this lays the groundwork to examine the controversy around Dade Middle School in South Dallas.

The Building of the Mega Middle School in South Dallas

Less than five years ago, there were two high schools, two middle schools, and four elementary schools in the community of South Dallas. In 2012 Dallas Independent School District (DISD) closed nine schools in the district due to budget cuts (Haag, 2011; Dukehart, 2012). Table 4 on the following page shows the effect of those school closings.

Table 4: South Dallas School Closings 2011-2015

| South Dallas School in 2011 | Status of South Dallas Schools in 2015 |
|--|---|
| James Madison High School | Open |
| Lincoln High School | Open |
| Billy Earl Dade Middle Learning Center (Now Billy Earl Dade Middle School) | Open |
| Pearl C. Anderson Middle Learning Center | Closed |
| Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School | Closed |
| Julia C. Frazier Elementary | Closed |
| H.S. Thompson Learning Center | Closed |
| Joseph J. Rhoads Learning Center | Open |
| Charles Rice Learning Center | Open |

With only one middle school and two elementary school left in South Dallas, it becomes difficult for many families to remain living in the community and not experience barriers to gaining access to quality education. One school closing that led to a great deal of controversy in the South Dallas community was Pearl C. Anderson Middle Learning Center, lovingly called Pearl C. by many South Dallas residents. Pearl C. was located in the heart of South Dallas on Hatcher Street and generations of South Dallas families attended school there. DISD closed Pearl C. with the intentions of building a larger school that both former Pearl C. students and Dade Middle Learning Center students could attend. DISD made the decision to go through with that plan and both Pearl C. and Dade students were told that they would be attending a new state-of-the-art middle school at the start of the next school year in 2013. This new school would be called Dr. Billy Earl Dade Middle School. DISD failed to examine the effects the

merging of the two schools would have on the new school and its surrounding community.

Many South Dallas residents recognized that they were about to merge students from two separate parts of South Dallas that were known for local rivalry gangs. A community activist, Ms. Alpha expressed that,

Things kind of changed and so they decided to merge the two schools together, but I was very disappointed in the manner in which the school district did it because there wasn't anything put in place to bridge the gap and to make the merging of the two institutions a smooth process. It was as if the school district just took all the students, all the middle school kids in this community, and just threw them in that school.

- Ms. Alpha

Former Pearl C. and H.S. Thompson teacher, Ms. Criss, recalled how she knew that the rivalry existed between the two areas in South Dallas as a result of the interactions she was having with her students during class.

They have rival communities within their community, this one pulling the other communities. Those are rival gangs and I used to talk to them, because they'd talk about, they call them by their gang names and numbers and I said you do know that the person's name you're calling doesn't look like you. So you're giving credence to somebody that doesn't look like. You're giving credence to somebody that did not name that bus or they didn't call their group name after the bus route. I said, so you're going to keep calling somebody's name and giving props to somebody that you don't even know, doesn't look like you, but you're going to keep calling their name. I said they don't know you. You're giving them props. I said you called them 44, who named the bus 44? Who owns the bus 44? Who's making money off the bus 44? I said you're giving them their props. Why are you giving somebody else props? I said name it after you. Name whatever your little group is after you. You get the props. I said you're calling somebody else's name that named your community or named your street. No voice and they live somewhere else. I said, "stop doing that!" And they'd think.

- Ms. Criss

Although Ms. Criss tried to encourage the youth to examine the power the presence of local gangs had in their lives, she knew that something else had to be done about the merging of the two schools.

It hurt my heart that they set those children up to fail. They set them up to fail. They set them up to fail. And so my pastor, I went to church. I was fussing and complaining. He got together with some of the pastors. They went to the school board and the superintendent. The clergy, "we want to talk to you about what you're doing." He walks in and said, "I got 30 minutes. I'll give you all 30 minutes. I'll give you all 30 minutes." Because I was telling my pastor this is what I'm seeing. This is what I'm feeling. The only thing they did to join the groups together was they gave us some doors to sign.

- Ms. Criss

Towards the end of the school year in 2013, Pearl C. and Dade students were asked to sign wooden doors taken from the old Dade. The students were told that the doors would be used in the new Dade Middle School. Ms. Criss recalls some of the youth refusing to sign the doors.

They brought three doors over to our school and said have the kids over here sign them and we're going to put those doors in Dade. They got them up high somewhere. My sixth graders wouldn't sign them. They said we're not signing those doors Miss Criss. We don't want those kids over there to know we came from over here. They're going to jump us. It never registered with me. The eighth graders gladly signed it, because they knew they didn't have to go. Them little sixth grade babies said we're not signing that. We're not putting our name on there. They refused to do it. It hurt me that nobody cared enough about the community to try to build a bond, do some group activities, start having some social gatherings with the kids...

- Ms. Criss

No matter how much resistance DISD faced about the merging of these two South Dallas schools, the new Dr. Billy Earl Dade Middle School opened in August 2013. Right before the opening of the new Dade Middle School, the DISD superintendent at the time, Mike Miles, changed his plans on the number of administrators and teachers that would

be working at the new Dade Middle School. As opposed to bringing familiar teachers and administrators from both Pearl C. and the old Dade, the superintendent hired a brand new principal that had no connections to the South Dallas community and over half the teachers had less than two years of experience and were enrolled in the Teach for America program. The Teach for America program is notorious for placing inexperienced teachers in inner city schools without training or knowledge of the community they are serving. All of these things created chaos at the new Dade Middle School and over the span of two years the school had five principals. Ms. Vicki was strongly against the way DISD merged these two middle schools.

Well what it is, is that there was no plan. You know, it was like this thing was never well thought out because if they thought about it for a minute they would have realized that this was stupid, you know this was stupid. Especially since Mike Miles did not take the seasoned faculty from Pearl C. Anderson. He wanted to put those Teach for America kids over at this new school. And so many of those faculty and the Principal and Dade who wanted to go to the new school, he didn't take him either. So it was like you build this mega school that's a total experiment, you merge these two schools and then you don't take the people who actually know their community, know these parents, know the kids, you know, you don't take those people as your prior...it was like a total disaster. So to me they could not possibly have thought that this was going to work.

- Ms. Vicki

Ms. Vicki was right about the merger not working because the month before this case study began, a huge fight took place at the new Dade Middle School and it escalated to where the on-site DISD police officers used pepper spray on the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students.

“The Riot” or Was It?

On May 11, 2015, some Dade Middle School parents received texts and phone calls from their children in the middle of the school day. It was clear through the text

messages and phone calls that their children were in distress. A number of parents received phone calls with their children crying and screaming with complaints of burning eyes, vomiting, and not being able to breathe. Like any parent would, they began to call the school to ask questions about what was going on. Unfortunately, with the influx of calls and the school being placed on emergency lock down as the result of a large fight parents did not receive any answers. Many parents left work or home and drove to the school and demanded to be let in to ensure the safety of their children but the lock down prevented anyone from entering or exiting Dade Middle School. A parent got on the phone with the local press and news shortly after and they were on the scene reporting that a riot had occurred at Dade Middle School in South Dallas within an hour.

What was referred to as a riot, led to 1) controversy throughout the South Dallas community, 2) a required assembly for all Dade Middle School students and teachers, and 3) a school board meeting to address the issue. According to Alpha Thomas who spends a great deal of time volunteering at Dade Middle School, what occurred at Dade on that day in May was not an actual riot. It was just a fight that broke out between two or three students. When the fight broke out right after lunch, many of the students that were on their way to the next class period ran towards the fights to watch. One DISD officer was working to break the fight up while another officer saw the crowd coming toward him, pulled out pepper spray, and sprayed the crowd that was running towards the fight.

The existence of one fight is far from a riot but it was labeled as such through the local press and many parents and community members were outraged by the use of

pepper spray on middle school students along with many other issues they felt the school was facing. This was not the first time a fight occurred at Dade Middle School. Fights were actually very common as a result of the merging of the two schools and it seemed that not one of the five principals over the two-year span could control them. The day after this so-called riot, DISD superintendent, Mike Miles, held an assembly at Dade and warned all of the students that he would not tolerate any more fights and that he would kick students out of the school if they fought. Egypt described the incident at Dade and what the superintendent said at the assembly during one of the focus groups.

Tore down from the ground out after all them principals kept coming. Kids kept running teachers out...Like he [Mike Miles] was just basically saying if you do something, like one thing, you getting put out the school. It could be anything, you getting put out the school.

- Egypt

After the Dade Middle School assembly, held by Mike Miles at Dade, the school board had a meeting that Ms. Vicki attended. She expressed her concerns that many other community members shared about the fact that they made a mistake about merging the two schools. A number of community members at the school board meeting that night demanded to see changes in the next upcoming school year and DISD worked throughout the summer of 2015 to make Dade a more inviting place for students, teachers, and administrators.

The SJYD framework requires that researchers examine the social conditions that youth of color live under and it is clear that there are both historical and current barriers to education and other social services for youth living in the South Dallas community. Specifically taking the history of school closings and its impact on South Dallas into

consideration I argue that youth enrolled in the SAAC program are forced to navigate the oppressive forces of DISD.

DISD can be identified as an oppressive force because it refuses to recognize the importance of safety for the youth that attend Dade Middle School. By refusing to recognize the existence of rival neighborhood gangs and merging all South Dallas middle school youth into one school, DISD put all of the youth, teachers, and administrators in danger. Violent fights were inevitable and DISD received warnings from local South Dallas residents but they still went through with the merge. This lack of care for the middle school youth in South Dallas and the South Dallas community sheds light on the ways in which DISD is an oppressive force that creates social toxins, like violence, for youth living in South Dallas.

Summary/Conclusion

This chapter covered 1) a history of the South Dallas community, 2) an introduction to the South Dallas Cultural Center and the Summer Arts at the Center (SAAC) program, 3) the community relationship with the SDCC, and 4) the significance of Billy Earl Dade Middle School. From the history of the community to the so-called riot that occurred at Dade Middle School one month before the program began, it is clear that knowledge of the setting for this case study is significant to the ways in which the SAAC program applies the SJYD framework. Understanding the effect that these social conditions have on South Dallas youth, the SDCC steps in to facilitate healing for youth by enacting a type of care that DISD refuse to recognize they need. The following

chapter will examine the ways in which the SAAC program staff enacts radical care to facilitate the radical healing process for the Black youth that attend the program.

CHAPTER III

ENACTING RADICAL CARE FOR COMMUNAL SURVIVAL

Introduction

The first section of this chapter will provide an insight on how the concept, described by Ginwright (2010a), of radical care is connected to the familial relationships that exist at the SDCC. An examination of the opportunities provided to the youth in the SAAC program and the expectations program staff set out for everyone that comes into the space will also be explored. The second section will delve into the ways in which program staff enacts radical care through resistance. This section will discuss the issues surrounding the Free Summer Lunch Program at the time this case study was conducted. The third section of this chapter will provide an insight into the specific tactics program staff apply to enact radical care within the space of the SDCC. The final section will revisit the concept of radical care and connect it to the well-being of the South Dallas community.

One component of the radical healing radical healing process involves Black youth receiving opportunities to engage with spaces where caring relationships and community recognition exist (Ginwright, 2010a). Another component of the radical healing process involves youth engaging with these spaces that youth are able to build their critical consciousness and develop a positive cultural identity (Ginwright, 2010a). Adults that create spaces for the facilitation of radical healing utilize certain tactics to ensure youth feel safe, and in turn open up to heal from trauma wounds that are inflicted

on them through personal experiences and constraints that systems and structures of oppressions (e.g. education systems, juvenile justice systems, foster care systems, etc.) place on them. This case study found that these spaces are integral to the healing process because they enact what is referred to by Ginwright (2010a) as *radical care* in order to advocate for the well-being of the youth and the community they live in.

Throughout this chapter I will attempt to redefine the concept of *care* in a way that goes beyond traditional notions of care in the field of youth development. Research and discussions around care in youth development are generally related to familial and mentor relationships (Chase-Landsdale, Wakschlag, & Brooks-Gunn, 1995; Rhodes, 2004). Some youth development researchers like Leffert, et al. (1998) created models like the 40 Developmental Assets, which incorporates care as both an internal and external asset that youth need for a positive development into adulthood. These authors conceptualize care as a form of support for positive youth development but they fail to address how social, political, and economic structures, like the juvenile justice, health, and education systems, hinder and sometimes completely prevent the support youth, specifically youth of color, need to have a positive development into adulthood.

While traditional notions of care described in the *40 Developmental Assets* (Search Institute, 2007) model are helpful in explaining the SAAC program processes, the concept of radical care provides a more in-depth explanation as to how the South Dallas Cultural Center (SDCC) functions as a space of refuge for Black youth in South Dallas. The radical healing model views care as both personal and political and it works as one of the four components that make up the radical healing process. Ginwright

(2010a) refers to care within Black communities as a mode that acts as a buffer and is a “form of cultural armor that creates and sustains community life” (2010a, p. 68).

What Ginwright (2010a) calls “radical care” in the radical healing model is not simply traditional notions of care related to compassion, radical care requires communities and youth workers to think about enacting care for communal survival. The term communal survival used throughout this chapter refers to the importance of recognizing that many individuals that make up the communities where urban Black youth live perform a great deal of work to have their basic needs met for survival. Based on this definition of radical care, I argue that it is necessary but insufficient due the urban social conditions of the South Dallas community discussed in Chapter II.

This case study found that due to existing barriers, community residents applied certain tactics to survive or have their needs met. Radical care is a specific mode of care related to communal survival because it involves the actions of community members supporting one another through difficult times and hardships like death, homelessness, or illness (Ginwright, 2010a). The SDCC is an integral part of communal survival in South Dallas because this mode of care is adopted to help youth and their community meet physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943).

As I examined care within the space of the SAAC program for this case study I made attempts to not focus on quantifying the concept of care. This chapter will rely heavily on in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant-observations to

work towards what Rauner (2000) argues to be a shift towards understanding care as a process. According to Rauner,

We tend to value that which we can measure. An important challenge facing researchers studying caring and its effects on development is to articulate a set of reasonable expectations for the extent to which caring can have an impact and the extent to which this impact can be quantified. Even if one could surmount the difficulties of measuring caring, a focus on specific outcomes might miss the most important effect of caring: the creation of social connectedness and the orientation towards engagement with others. The time and attention that both adults and young people in organized care settings devote to care relationships might have the primary effect of binding young people to social connections that promote stability and interdependence. Organized care settings are often vital centers of belonging in a young person's life...If forming connections is what is important in caring, then we should look at the process of caring itself to evaluate care. (p.88)

Rauner provides insight into one critical issue within the field of youth development related to our contextualization of care as an outcome. Youth development models like the *40 Developmental Assets* (Leffert, et al., 1998) and the *5 C's of Positive Youth Development* (Lerner, et al., 2000) quantify care as an outcome of positive youth development. For example, the *40 Developmental Assets* list "caring" as an internal asset.

Leffert, et al., write that caring as an internal asset is achieved when a "young person places high value on helping others" (2000, p. 212). These authors go on to propose that caring is a skill that "young people develop gradually over time as a result of observation and socialization experiences" (Leffert, et al., 2000, p. 211). In the *40 Developmental Assets* model "caring" is a result or *outcome* of experiences. **Outcomes** in youth development programs generally assess what youth get out of their participation in a program whereas **processes** are the specific activities, behaviors, and interactions that

lead to the program outcomes. This case study attempts to move the field of youth development forward in the examining the *process* of care in youth development programs like the SAAC.

Familial Relationships: Opportunities and Expectations

The SDCC provides the space for youth to develop familial relationships with staff and their peers that include meeting expectations. In addition to this, the staff members at the SDCC value the importance of providing Black youth with an understanding and trusting environment that promotes youth agency. These familial relationships require staff and youth to develop reciprocal relationships where one another's expectations are met. Most importantly, the familial relationships established through the SDCC are grounded in an understanding and trust that promotes agency for youth that attend programs at the SDCC. The results of this case study found that not only does Ginwright's (2010a) concept of enacting radical care exist at the SDCC, the structure of the familial relationships are important to the survival of the community and its members.

The Role of Mama Vicki

Yea, she's, everybody knows oh, Ms. Vicki don't play but we know, okay she, there's another side to her. She, she can be hip, she can get down but its, she draws a line on certain things when she know things aren't right. Basically cause she's like a mom so she'll know how to be there for you and confide in you and help you be able to get through things. Being the stern person that she is, she's not gonna let you boo-hoo your way through a situation. You gotta be able to take responsibility for your actions and stuff like that. So it's like in the end, someone may seem rough at first but once you get through it, you thank her for it

in the end cause she's gonna tell you straight up how it is. She don't sugar coat nothing.

- Nina Davis, SAAC Teaching Assistant

As the manager of the SDCC, Ms. Vicki holds a number of responsibilities to the youth that attend the SAAC program and the community of South Dallas. Ms. Vicki does not take this responsibility lightly due to her recognition of the importance of her relationship with the youth, parents, and staff to the success of the SAAC program. As a result, the ways in which Ms. Vicki enacts care by establishing familial relationships through the program.

The term “familial relationships” will be used throughout this section to convey the caring relationships youth participants and program leaders have with one another. One of the first things I noticed while observing program activities was youth referring to the program manager, Vicki, as “Mama Vicki” or “Mama V.” Referring to an elder in the Black community as “Mama” is fairly common so it was not surprising when I first heard one of the youth participants say “Mama Vicki.” Placing “mama” in front of Ms. Vicki’s name signified a maternal relationship commonly displayed in many black families where the matriarch of the family is referred to as “big mama” or “Mama (insert their name here).”

Urban ethnographer Carol Stack, would refer to the relationship youth hold with Ms. Vicki as a *fictive kinship*. In the book *All Our Kin*, Stack writes, “fictive kin relations are maintained by consensus between individuals, and in some contexts can last a lifetime” (1975, p. 59). Stack also connects fictive kinships to parent-child connections

that are sometimes not biological. In her ethnographic study on an urban Black community, Stack (1975) theorizes that children and youth are not always cared for by their biological parents due to a number of issues that exist within poor urban Black communities. Stack explains the formation of these kinships between children and their non-biological parents when she writes,

Throughout the world, individuals distinguish kin from non-kin. Moreover, kin terms are frequently extended to non-kin, and socially recognized parent-child connections (Goodenough, 1970). The chain of parent-child connections is essential to the structuring of kin groups...the folk system of parental rights and duties determines who is eligible to be a member of the personal kinship network ...This system of rights and duties should not be confused with the official, written statutory law of the state. The local folk system of rights and duties pertaining to parenthood are enforced only sanctions within the community. (1975, p. 45-46).

Based on Stack's conceptualization of fictive kin and parent-child connections, I argue that the act of placing the word "mama" in front of Ms. Vicki's name signifies a socially recognized fictive kinship within the space of the SDCC. The existence of the fictive kinship established with Ms. Vicki adds to the argument that radical care exist at the SDCC.

The act of the youth placing "mama" in front of Ms. Vicki's name is what makes the care Ms. Vicki provides radical. It is radical because it works against traditional notions of care under the oppressive social, political, and economic forces that exist in the South Dallas community. I argue that the action of working against these traditional notions of care, like the development of fictive kinships, is radical because it challenges and transforms how care is displayed in youth development programs and organizations.

Both youth participants and teachers reflected on how they view their interactions with others, and specifically Ms. Vicki, at the SDCC. One former youth participant, Brandon, described the SDCC as a big happy family:

Yea, yea. This is a more, this is a space where everybody is open minded. A big ole happy family. Everybody loves each other, like, like, while ago when I hugged Mama V. I call her Mama V. She's like my mama. Yea. Everybody, like Mama V is like a mama to every kid that's in this program.

- Brandon

At the head of this self-described big happy family is Ms. Vicki and many youth participants and their teachers viewed their relationship with her as sacred, supportive, and most importantly caring. Many times while observing at the SAAC program I noticed Ms. Vicki taking on the role of a loving mother and caring adult. On the very first day of the program as youth participants arrived with their parents or guardians Ms. Vicki fully embraced each of them. While I was not aware of the intimacy of each relationship Ms. Vicki had with the parents and guardians of the youth that attended the program, I quickly realized that everyone that walked through the front door trusted her and knew she cared about their kids.

From that point on I set out to understand how the caring relationship that everyone had with Ms. Vicki was established. I used interviews as an opportunity to invite teachers and youth participants to speak about their relationship with Ms. Vicki. When asked about a caring relationship established at the SDCC a former youth participant and current African dance teacher, Kim, said:

Then you got Mama Vicky, mama/mentor/I need you when I need you, I'm going to come through for you, whenever you call. I've called her many, many times, you know, when I was just feeling discouraged, especially when we moved away. She was upset that we moved but, I was like, "But my husband got the job." She

was like, "Okay, all right. But do you have to go?" But yeah, she's always, she's helped me out a lot. When I needed a job and I was tired of working like, driving trucks, when I was tired of that, she's like, "Well, let me talk to Etta. You can dance. You can come up here and teach." So, she did and Miss Etta was like, "Okay, sign all that, do what you need to do. You work this time and this time and go on." And that was it. So I had a job and I had—I've been working here since, until I left.

- Kim

Kim was not the only individual at the SDCC that spoke about Ms. Vicki as a supportive mother. Orange, a young person that participated in the SAAC program for six years stated:

Okay, Mama Vicki. When I first got here, like she was just the kindest person here that I've known and like Mama Vicki is just like a grandmother or a mom like she cares, she concerns, she'll ask me about my school, my grades and stuff. Last year she asked me about my report card or whatever and I showed that to her and she was surprised and I don't know. Like just talking to Mama Vicki you just know like, you just, you could tell her anything and she seems like she'll know the answer to it though because she's like an interesting person to talk to and wise and stuff. So that's it about Mama Vicki like she just, Mama Vicki is just like a good person, she's a very good person. Like a grateful person to be here, she's helped out kids and I'm grateful to have her, to have met her. That's the kind of person she is... Helping me, me helping her. She's supportive. She's concerning about the people around her. She don't play no games, she's quick-witted. Like, sometimes she's stealthy too when she walks around the building like let's just say we're in class and she'll just walk in, you won't even know she's in there. She does that a lot too.

- Orange

Orange expresses how Ms. Vicki takes certain actions that show her care for him like asking about his grades in school and checking his report card. These actions or displays of care attribute what makes the SDCC a space of refuge. Both Kim and Orange know that Ms. Vicki is simply a phone call, walk, or drive away if they need anything or simply just someone to talk to.

Brandon, Kim, Orange, and other program participants and teachers spoke highly of Ms. Vicki and the opportunities she provided them. The act of providing a job or source of income to Kim illuminates one of many ways Ms. Vicki enacts radical care³ and it also connects to what I refer to as a philosophy of care adopted by Ms. Vicki. This philosophy requires staff members to view their relationship with the children and youth at the program as a unit that includes the biological and non-biological family members. Ms. Vicki expresses the meanings behind her philosophy of care when she states:

Well for me a caring relationship means that you are one, paternalistic, but that you come in with a sense that you have a responsibility to these children. A responsibility to bring your best game to the table, as well as to do the research and the reading and stuff that is necessary to prepare them [youth participants] for what we're trying to do. And for understanding that children come from more than this themselves, if they have a unit around them that you also have to be responsible to. And accountable to.

- Ms. Vicki

Caring for Ms. Vicki meant preparing oneself as a teacher by doing research and gaining knowledge about the topic being covered during that specific summer.

Ms. Vicki's philosophy of care requires a responsibility that staff members have to the children and youth that attend the program each summer. This sense of responsibility is not only to the children and youth but also to their parents, guardians, and the community. This philosophy of care is more connected to Stack's (1975) conceptualization of care than youth development researchers Leffert, et al.'s (1998) care within the *40 Developmental Assets* model discussed in the introduction of this chapter. In this section, I argued that Ms. Vicki's philosophy of care signifies the

³ Refer back to introduction of this chapter for an explanation of the radical care concept.

existence of radical care. However, Ms. Vicki was not the only staff member enacting this form of care within the space of the SDCC. Observing interactions between staff members (SAAC program teachers, SDCC program managers, etc.) and the children and youth that were enrolled in the program during the summer of 2015 provided insight on how this space of refuge was filled with adults following Ms. Vicki's philosophy of care.

Familial Relationships between Adult Staff and Children and Youth Participants

To gain an understanding of how adult staff members conceptualized a caring relationship I simply asked them to describe what a caring relationship looked and felt like within the space of the SDCC during each interview. In many ways staff members explained the relationship they had with the children and youth as communal.

Communal in this sense meant that staff members were working to create an environment established through the importance of collectivism. Staff members worked to establish relationships with all members of the South Dallas community, which included the youth that attended the program and their entire family unit.

Harold, the SDCC assistant program manager, viewed caring relationships as the act of investing in families but paying close attention to the fact that a family has different parts and each part of the family holds different needs.

I think for me it looks like—I mean what we try to do is invest in families, right. And what that investment looks like for different parts of the family is different, right. There's stuff that we do with children, there's stuff that we do with parents, there's stuff that we do with grandparents that's all about how do you become a member of our family and this is not just some sort of—so you know really it's engaging with parents, asking questions that relate to children but may relate to other things as yourself. We have an interest in your whole family unit. And not in any kind of investigative way that says, you know, we're going to call CPS

[Child Protective Services]. But it's just like if we believe in the proverb it takes a village to raise a child. So what is our responsibility when they're with us and then how can we assist you in other ways.

- Harold

Staff members like Ms. Vicki and Harold conceptualize responsibility as a form of care enacted at the SDCC where investments are made through specific acts. These acts include gaining knowledge in order to provide the best opportunities for children and youth to learn more about their culture and the arts and becoming members of the children and youth participant's so-called village in order to provide support to their entire family.

Call me Mama Jendayi

I observed staff members take on this responsibility in a number of classrooms at the SAAC program. One example of how teachers or adult staff members established familial relationships with youth participants took place on the second day of the program when the teen group attended their rites of passage class. The teen group walked into the classroom and the first thing they heard was West African music coming from a portable speaker plugged into their teacher's computer. The teacher was writing on a giant sticky notepad and as they walked in she turned around, smiled, and said, "have a seat in one of the chairs you see a notebook and papers." After they all sat down their teacher turned down the music a little and welcomed them to their Rites of Passage class. She told youth that they could call her Mama Jendayi, Miss Jendayi, or Miss Jones. She recognized that some of the youth remembered her from being in her class in

previous summers but many of them were new to the program so she told them, "most of the youth that have taken my class call me Mama Jendayi."

As the weeks of the program progressed all the youth participants in the teen group called her Mama Jendayi. I soon realized that Vicki was not the only staff member that fostered a maternal relationship with children and youth at the SAAC program. The action of telling the youth to call her "Mama" Jendayi is significant to radical care because it is connected to the same form of fictive kin, theorized by Stack (1975), Ms. Vicki created and maintains at the SDCC. Mama Jendayi fostered this form of relationship with youth in many ways but one of the first steps she took to foster this relationship was to introduce herself as a mother figure, Mama Jendayi.

After Mama Jendayi introduced herself to the youth in the teen group, she told them to look through the stack of papers on the table in front of them and pull out the worksheet titled "Give Me A Slice of P.I.E.S!" Mama Jendayi then told youth that this was a worksheet designed to help her better understand their state of mind when they enter her classroom. The directions on the worksheet read, *"The P.I.E.S. wheel helps us communicate how we see, feel, and think. By examining the areas of physical body, intellectual mind, emotional feelings, and spiritual awareness, we can communicate from a place of wholeness."* Below the written directions was a circle divided into four pieces with one piece designated as physical, one piece designated as intellectual, one piece designated as emotional, and one piece designated as spiritual. On the bottom left-hand corner of the worksheet was a word bank that contained words like fresh, happy, loving, grounded, bored, tired, depressed, blessed, alone, sacred, beautiful, and hurt.

Mama Jendayi asked the youth to give her a piece of pie for each area by filling in a word that best described how they felt at the current moment.

This activity required the youth to choose a word from the word bank or use their own word to describe how they were feeling physically (P), intellectually (I), emotionally (E), and spiritually (S). Mama Jendayi told the youth that they should always be honest when completing this worksheet and they would be completing this worksheet at the beginning of each class meeting. She stressed the importance of the worksheet to her knowledge on what state of mind they were in at the beginning of each class meeting. Based on how each young person completed the worksheet, she would know how to respond to them during their time together.

Mama Jendayi went on to mention the importance of knowing how each of the youth physically felt at the beginning of her class. She specifically, wanted to know if they were physically feeling hungry, tired, and/or weak. Based on these physical feelings she would attempt to meet their needs during her class time. Making attempts to meet the needs of each young person in her classroom showed how Mama Jendayi cared about each young person in her class. The key outcome of the exercise was for the youth to communicate using their personal words and voices. The young people felt like they had the opportunity to express themselves and have their voices heard.

Egypt, a youth participant, said that she enjoyed the Rites of Passage class because, "*...like sometimes we have to express ourself and find out certain things that's inside of us like saying that we're bold or other stuff.*" While observing the interactions between the children and youth in the program and the adult staff members I recognized

that a level of comfort had to be reached before they expressed themselves. Adult staff members like Mama Jendayi recognized this and used comforting activities and inviting language to provide a space where youth felt at ease enough to express themselves without feeling judged or shamed.

The process of taking on this responsibility of radical care involved reaching out to the youth participants in order to know more about their lives and their needs in the program. Some adult staff members, like Mama Jendayi, enacted care by developing maternal relationships with the children and youth participants. This maternal relationship made the youth feel comfortable enough to open up to her about their needs. Other SAAC teachers, like the hip-hop music production teacher Malik, developed sibling type relationships with children and youth participants to enact radical care.

Everyone's Older Brother: Mr. Malik

Malik treated the youth like he was their older brother and during his hip-hop music production class he would take interest in learning more about the personality of each young person. For example, on the first day of the hip-hop music production class Malik asked each young person to introduce themselves by sharing their name and favorite musical artist. Malik told them that they did not have to provide a profound answer as to why they like that musical artist and the answer, "I just like them" was an okay response. On that day I watched Malik make direct eye contact with each young person as they introduced themselves. When they would say their name to Malik, he would repeat it back to them to be sure that he heard it correctly.

Malik then used their responses to the question about their favorite musical artist as a tool to ignite discussion. For example, Justice told Malik that his favorite hip-hop artist was Kendrick Lamar and Malik responded by saying that he really liked Kendrick Lamar because he's not afraid to show his blackness to the world. Malik then went on to say that as a hip-hop music producer in the industry it is a challenge to be true to your authentic blackness, whatever it may look like. He then told each young person that they need to know that their blackness is not something that they should be ashamed of and it was a good thing that Justice liked Kendrick Lamar because he's one of few hip-hop artists that is not afraid to be himself.

Similar to an older brother Malik took interest in the type of musical artist that each young person loved. Not only did he take interest, he also affirmed the reasons why they liked that particular artist. As any older brother would, Malik used his wisdom from experiences working as a hip-hop music producer to provide knowledge or insight into the industry that releases the music that the young people in the program listen to. Based on this insight the young people began to think about hip-hop artists that were not afraid to show their blackness to the world.

The young people even had a private discussion amongst themselves about how Kendrick Lamar styles his hair. They then compared it to another hip-hop artist named J. Cole. The youth came to the conclusion that neither of these hip-hop artists were afraid to be Black and the young people liked that aspect of these two artist. These discussions are critical to the development of positive cultural identity in Black youth but they must be given the safe space to have these discussions. Ginwright (2010a) argues that radical

healing takes place in spaces where urban Black youth culture is celebrated and in Malik's classroom young people were able to celebrate their culture of hip-hop in a way that provided opportunities for discussion about identity politics and how institutions, like the hip-hop music industry, affect the artist and the music that they listen to.

I argue that by providing this space to celebrate hip-hop culture but also critiquing it based on the wisdom of an older brother is an example of radical care. I identify Malik as an older brother to the youth in the program because of the actions he takes towards getting to know them on a personal level. Based on Malik's genuine interest in the lives of the youth, they feel more comfortable having discussion with him about their cultural identity and hip-hop. This familial older brother relationship between Malik and the youth participants also signifies the existence of radical care within the space of the SDCC. As young people, the youth enrolled in the program spend a great deal of time at educational institutions like school and these institutions do not make a great deal of effort for these types of discussions to occur at school.

As a result of the ways in which many social structures like the education system view Black youth and their culture, alternative spaces where they can openly affirm and critique themselves and their culture are critical to their development (Halpern, Barker, & Mollard, 2000). At the SDCC, adult staff member enact radical care by developing familial relationships with the children and youth so they feel comfortable to celebrate their identity as Black children and youth. However, adult staff members were not the only ones caring for one another and I set out to understand how the caring relationships between youth were formed at the SDCC.

Caring Relationships among Youth Participants

Since many of the youth participants grow up together in the program, they form close bonds that exemplify a caring relationship. Many youth attend different schools during the school year but keep in touch even after the summer program has ended.

Purple, a youth participant that also worked as a teaching assistant during the summer 2015 program shared how she made close friends with other youth at the SAAC program and how they eventually became God sisters.

Because like when adults tell you something like you don't really listen but with kids and if you're going through the same thing, you'll be like oh, she's no different than me and so I think this center helps with like bonding because many of the people that I work with now I was in, I was in camp with and, and some of them have become my God sister and everything so our relationship has grown.

- Purple

Even the participants that are now adults and have their own children enrolled in the program, like Kim, still keep in touch with the people they attended the program with.

During her interview Kim spoke about the group of friends she attended the program with and how even after they had all left the program and transitioned into adulthood they were still uplifting one another and caring for one another during difficult times.

And you know, once we kept each other together, or we talked, we continued to talk to each other; we would uplift each other. I mean, there would be some tough times when we actually had to call each other and just cry and just get it out.

- Kim

Bonds were also formed through the development of intimate romantic relationships between youth participants. Bani, who had been in the SAAC program since she was

five or six years old, proclaimed that she grew up at the SDCC and even experienced her first crush one summer at the SAAC program.

I met him here like he was, he was like, I don't know he was the first guy, oh my gosh, this is so personal but anyways, he was the first like guy I liked. I'm just gonna tell you the whole story.... Oh my gosh, first everything. Like my first hug, my first kiss, my first crush, like everything has happened here. This place has so many memories. Not just like about the people that I meet, I mean well that too but like my experiences here has just, it will take you a long way when you like really get into it but so yea, so.

- Bani

I soon realized that bonds between the youth participants form when they create memories together. For example, Banie and Nina Davis both recall the day they met the famous poet Nikki Giovanni.

A couple of years prior to this case study, Ms. Vicki received tickets to a poetry show located in downtown Dallas that featured Nikki Giovanni. Ms. Vicki knew this would be a great event for SAAC youth who loved writing and reading poems. Bani recalled her memories from the night she met Nikki Giovanni below.

Yea and one of my favorite outings that we went to. When I had met Nikki Giovanni and she signed...I have her book. She signed my book, I have a picture...I love her so much and we had went to one of her shows. I think it was in downtown or something like that. Me, Nina Davis, and Brandon. We went, because we're really affiliated with like poetry and stuff like that and music, good music, good poetry all that good vibes stuff. But we went there a whole lot of people, they were doing poetry. It was just like a poetry night at a poetry club with people doing nothing but poetry and she had talked about the book that she had released. Everybody got a, well not everybody. You had to pay for a copy of the book but we all got a copy of the book, we didn't have to pay for it. We got a copy of the book, we, she did a meet and greet upstairs and we met her. We took pictures with her. She signed our book. Yes, it was a really good experience, I, that made me so happy that I was like here like at the cultural center. I've been here for so long and I got to meet somebody like that. Many people, like many people be sleeping on Nikki Giovanni.

- Bani

Nina Davis also recalled her memories of excitement from that night.

She was so much different than I expected. I was like, I was thinking she was gonna be all down to earth. She was so loud and like blunt with everything. I was just like. Yes, she was telling us all her stories. She told us the story behind one of her poems in her book. I couldn't remember the story, I just know it had something about her mama. Yes, I was just like this. Are you serious? Yes, I swear when I first met her I was looking, looking for one of them old ladies like, oh how you doin? She was like hey, how you doin? I didn't even recognize her til' I looked at the book and I'm just like oh, that's her. But yea, that was a really good experience. I almost didn't go but it was a really good experience. Yea, that was fun.

- Nina Davis

Experiencing monumental moments in their development, like having their first crush or meeting their favorite famous poet, with one another created a bond between youth participants. Once these bonds are formed youth participants become comfortable with one another and these feelings of comfort were represented in a number of ways.

As the SAAC program entered into its second week, I realized that the young people in the teen group began to tease each other like they were siblings. They would tease each other about everything. For example, they would argue with one another about topics like who had a crush on whom. While the adult staff members would step in and attempt to end or redirect the teasing, there were a number of times that the young people ended or redirected it themselves.

One day during poetry class each young person in the teen group had to stand up at the end of class and recite the poems they wrote that day. This exercise was used to help young people develop skills related to voice projection and delivery. As they read their poems the poetry teacher, Kijana, would assist them in progressing their skills, but there were times she asked them to critique one another. It was during these critiques

that I noticed how the young people would attempt to stop or redirect a tense situation.

The excerpt from my field notes below illuminate how this occurred during poetry class that day.

Today at the end of poetry class everyone had to stand and read the poems they wrote that day and I noticed that when it was time for Blue to stand up and read his poems, he refused. Kijana told him that everyone had to read at least one of their poems today and she called him up to the front to read. Blue finally stood up but just stared at his paper and did not say anything. I could hear all the other young people in the room whispering to each other and Oumar said out loud, “come on now Blue we’re trying to go to lunch” and other young people in the room chimed in and began to complain about how hungry they were and how Blue needed to hurry up and read his poem so they could go eat. I could tell that Blue was really nervous and may have anxiety about reading out loud. Then Bug encouraged him and said, “Y’all be quiet. We’re all nervous about reading out loud but no one is going to judge you. It’s to help you so you can get better.” Bug then told him to ignore what everybody else was saying and to just read his poem. Blue still stood there in silence just staring at his paper until finally Kijana told everyone that they could go to lunch but asked Blue to stay to talk with her after class.

- Aishia’s Field Notes

Later on that day I found out that Blue had trouble reading and writing.

The staff at the center suspected that he was reading on a first grade reading level but he was about to enter the ninth grade. They quickly jumped into action by setting him up with a time to meet with Liz, the early literacy teacher, to get tested for dyslexia. I viewed this as the adult staff exhibiting care towards Blue.

In addition, I also realized that the interaction between Blue and Bug during poetry class that day showed that the youth cared for one another. While many of them were upset with Blue for not reading his poem out loud, Bug stepped up and ended this tension by providing support to Blue and encouraging him. When Bug actively told the rest of the group to be quiet and let Blue read his poem, I viewed this as one of the many

ways youth expressed care to one another. Bug standing up for Blue that day established a sense of community by displaying support of one another. From that point on and throughout the rest of the five weeks of the program they all supported one another when they were asked to read their poems out loud or perform.

Forming bonds and caring relationships is considered a natural part of early child development (Swick, 2005). Understanding the context these bonds form under is important to the conceptualization of radical care. While many of the youth supported and bonded with one another to establish a sense of community amongst themselves, the SDCC staff provided opportunities for youth to learn more about and engage with their culture. For example, Bani recognized Ms. Vicki calling her to invite her to see Nikki Giovanni perform as an example of how she cared for her.

Okay a caring relationship feels really, really, really, really good. I mean it just, it keeps you like motivated, it keeps you like wanting to you know do good and do right and be on top of your game I guess. A caring relationship, it feels like you can like you know be who you are without nobody judging you or you know provoking you, looking down on you, stuff like that. I mean it feels good to know that people care about you who considers you who takes their, takes their time out to call you and tell you, hey do you wanna come do like that, that's a good feeling. I know that they got my back.

- Bani

Bani believed that Ms. Vicki called her because she truly cared about her interest in poetry and her favorite poet Nikki Giovanni. I connect this to the form of radical care that provides opportunities for self-love and self-exploration (Ginwright, 2010a).

One of Ms. Vicki's main goals for the SAAC program is for South Dallas youth to have opportunity.

I'm a provider of opportunities, I ain't in the saving business. I'm going to give you these opportunities, if you take them some things may change and could be

for the better, but I'm not going to sit there and go down that tube with you.
- Ms. Vicki

Vicki proclaiming herself as a “provider of opportunities” is a form of resistance that shifts away from narratives about saving and being a savior for Black youth. Enacting radical care requires shifting the focus from saving black youth to recognizing that they live under conditions that take away or provide very few opportunities for the development of self-love and self-exploration. Vicki, along with the other adult staff at the SAAC program, recognize the lack of opportunity for Black youth living in South Dallas and make all attempts to enact care by providing opportunities related to the development of their cultural identity and critical consciousness.

Opportunities for Personal Development

According to Pittman, Irby, and Ferber (2001), youth development programs must go beyond meeting the basic needs of youth they serve. “Young people need affordable, accessible care and services (e.g., health and transportation), safe and stable places, and high-quality instruction and training. But they also need supports—relationships and networks that provide nurturing, standards and guidance—and **opportunities** to try new roles, master challenges and contribute to family and community” (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2001, p. 24). The SAAC program works to meet the basic needs of the youth and the community but they also strive to go beyond this level by providing personal development opportunities for youth that attend the program.

A couple of weeks before the SAAC program started I was invited to attend a staff meeting where swimming lessons were discussed. The summer of 2015 was the first year that the children and youth that attended the SAAC program would have the

opportunity to learn how to swim for free. All the teachers were excited about this opportunity and looked forward to using it as a way to address the issue of children and youth drowning during the summer time in local community and private pools. Although swimming lessons are not necessarily connected to Black culture and history, Ms. Vicki explained to me that swimming lessons was one of the many ways the SDCC made attempts to prepare children and youth for everyday life and adulthood.

So that is an indication of the kind of care that the staff takes in preparing for the program and thinking through what are the things that these kids really need to be doing in order to fortify this knowledge, you know. Even stuff like, you know, Miss Clark finding this swimming opportunity. It's like we are not always just micro focused on history, you know, it's like what are the things that we need to do to prepare our children for life. And that's the kind of stuff that they do regularly and I don't have to prompt it.

- Ms. Vicki

Swimming lessons took place at a local YMCA that provided transportation from the SDCC to the YMCA for all the children and youth in the SAAC program. I went to the local YMCA in my car and observed the first day of swimming lessons but before I left I met a number of parents that were dropping off their kids that morning. These parents were so excited about their children learning how to swim. Some of them even told me that they personally did not know how to swim so they could not teach their children. I also heard parents and guardians encouraging their children as they dropped them off to make sure to learn how to swim so they could teach their parents.

The swimming lessons were a way that the SDCC showed the community that they cared about the well-being of the children and youth in South Dallas. The number of child drowning's in Texas, especially during the summer time, is slowly decreasing (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 2015). However, during the

summer of 2015 Dallas County boasted the highest number of child drowning's reported in the state of Texas (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 2015). By providing swimming lessons in order to combat the number of children and youth of color that drown every year in the Dallas area the SDCC was enacting radical care to the community. I view this as radical care because most swimming lessons are not free so the children and youth that attend free summer programs like the SAAC program cannot afford swimming lessons. By offering free swimming lessons the adult staff provided families access to resources that are needed in order for the community to thrive. Another opportunity I connect to radical care was the existence of the paid teaching assistants at the SAAC program.

Each year of the SAAAC program Vicki hires assistants for the teachers. These assistants or TA's are youth participants that have been in the program for a significant amount of time. When I conducted the case study in the summer of 2015 there were five teaching assistants and majority of them had been in the program for five years or more. Showing dedication to the program by attending it every summer for five or more years was rewarded by providing these young people with employment. Most of the teaching assistants were juniors or seniors in high school and were at least 16 years old. Vicki and the rest of the adult staff members viewed the title of teaching assistant as an opportunity for youth participants.

This opportunity is not just handed to youth that consecutively participate in the program for five years or more. Youth that work as teaching assistants were required to be engaged and learn aspects of culture and the arts throughout their program

attendance. Harold discussed this with me during his interview where he mentions how important it is for the young people in the program to have an opportunity to teach a class or assist in teaching a class utilizing information that they've learned from participating in previous summers.

So there are different—and especially those who are TAs who can now teach aspects of the culture. There's things about professional management and all that stuff that they still have to learn. But, again, given the opportunity to teach a class or pass on instructional orders that's based off what you've been learning.
- Harold

Teaching assistants were assigned a specific class that they would be the TA for. Ms. Vicki made sure to assign each TA to a class they held an expertise in. For example, Banie and Nina Davis were both dancers and that was the art form that they were most interested in so Ms. Vicki placed them as the TA's for the African dance class. As the TA's their job was to assist the African dance teachers in helping their students learn specific choreography. In addition to this, Banie and Nina Davis were expected to assist with keeping the students engaged. Another example would be Devanté who was interested in drawing and other forms of visual art so Ms. Vicki placed him as the TA for the mural making class.

According to Sum, et al. (2014), the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex holds a youth unemployment rate of 8.8% and this rate decreased 14.5 points between 2000 and 2012. However, low-income areas in the metroplex like South Dallas are not experiencing much of the effects of this decrease. The Measure of America of the Social Science

Research Council examined the number of disconnected youth ⁴in Dallas County and South Dallas has the highest disconnected youth rate among all other neighborhoods in Dallas (Lewis & Burd-Sharps, 2013). By employing South Dallas youth the SDCC is taking a stand against youth unemployment in the community.

The SDCC enacts radical care by utilizing their funding sources and opportunities to employ South Dallas youth, which advances the community by providing job experience and skills to community members. The teaching assistants were extremely grateful for the opportunity to be employed by the SDCC but they knew how important it was to continue to do what I refer to as “meeting expectations.” This means that youth were aware that they were selected to hold the position as a TA because they understood the expectations that Ms. Vicki and other adult staff members had for them during the multiple summers they attended the program and they worked hard to meet them.

Meeting Expectations

Enacting radical care within the space of the SDCC meant that the program managers had to set up expectations for the youth participants and the adult teachers. I use the word expectations here to address how a certain set of guidelines were established for the adult teachers and the children and youth participants. These guidelines or expectations were implemented in a number of ways and they were closely related to how the SAAC program approaches discipline.

⁴ Disconnected youth is a term used by The Measure of America of the Social Science Research Council to refer to youth between the ages of 16 through 24 who are unemployed/not in the labor force, and also not enrolled in school (Lewis & Burd-Sharps, 2013).

According to Rauner (2000), discipline is important to sustaining care within a youth development organization or program. Rauner writes that “Disciplinary practices have a significant impact on organizational culture. Discipline can be punitive or...a constructive learning process” (2000, p. 103). I connect the way Rauner conceptualizes discipline in youth development organizations and programs to the form of radical care that exist at the SDCC. When expectations were not met at the SDCC, discipline was always constructive because it centered on redirection as oppose to punishment. I argue that this is how the SDCC sustains the radical care.

Youth Meeting Expectations

When you hear the word ‘*discipline*’ in many youth development programs you may automatically begin to think about a young person being asked to sit in a corner and think about what they’ve done for five or ten minutes before they can get back up and play. At the SAAC program, discipline encompasses more than just sitting in a corner and thinking. Since the program places a large focus on learning more about the arts and developing artistic skills, discipline is more related to becoming an expert in your craft. So if a young person is truly invested in becoming a visual artist adult staff members, like Ms. Vicki, will not only provide opportunities for that young person to learn more about being a visual artist but also push that young person to do their best work and not goof or fool around. Ms. Vicki stressed the importance of the young people in the program learning discipline and preparing for the rejection that comes with being an artist of color.

So, we stress the importance of discipline, we stress the importance of knowing the craft and loving the craft because it ain’t about star, you know, it’s about, if

this going to be your career you have got to be prepared for rejection, you've got to be prepared for all of that and all of that can only happen if you are really solid in what it is that you want to do.

- Ms. Vicki

I saw the form of discipline described above a number of times while conducting participant-observations. This form of discipline was displayed when Ms. Vicki and other adult staff members were supportive and caring but also firm when a young person was not meeting their expectations.

Bug, a youth participant, simply used the following words to describe Ms. Vicki: “*she tough but she loving at the same time. Like don't get, don't get on her bad side.*” The word tough here describes how one young person explained what happens when they do not meet her expectations. It was one thing to hear a young person described what happens when expectations are not met at the SAAC program but actually being present when Ms. Vicki responded to a young person not meeting her expectations was an eye-opening experience. Below is an excerpt from my audio field notes recorded on day three of the 2015 SAAC program.

When I said earlier that Mr. Harold was supposed to be doing theatre today, "okay well y'all go do some warm-up exercises and I'll be right back" and just left them to their own devices for like ten minutes basically and then Ms. Morgana showed up. While they were left to their own devices, Oumar led the games but Nia had control of the room. Nia basically if she did not understand the game, then no one was playing the game, right? If she had questions, it was almost like this was the only question for the game. Nobody else can ask any questions. So I learned that having control of the room is important to her and the reason why I learned that is because once Ms. Morgana walked in and it was time to get started she shut down. And when I say she shut down I mean she literally like just stopped engaging. Put her head down. Was picking at her nails like she wasn't even participating anymore. When asked to get up, everybody else got up and got into a circle and she just sat there in her chair and Ms. Morgana had to tell her, "everyone needs to join the circle" and then she finally got up. And then she took her own little precious time to get up there too. So just I'm just

going to shut down on you and I'm not...and even though like five minutes before you walked in here I was engaged with the rest of my peers. Like they played the game multiple times and she won every time so it wasn't like she wasn't participating before Ms. Morgana walked in but once Ms. Morgana walked in she shut down, she stopped participating.

So Ms. Vicki comes in, she just pops her little head in and she sees Nia not responding, not doing what she's being asked to do so she pulls her outside and has a conversation with her. I don't really know what that conversation was, what was said but I'm pretty sure she was given an ultimatum that if you do not participate that you can no longer be here. Granted, what I've heard about Nia is that she comes every year, she's been coming since she was a kid...She, every year they struggle with keeping her in the program because she shuts down because she doesn't participate because she pops an attitude with the teachers and so she told me, she's told us, not me directly, but in general when she was talking about herself she was saying that like, "I don't like to do one thing over and over again." I think it was during hip-hop on Monday when Mr. Keith asked them like what are your dreams and aspirations? Like, what are you going to do when you grow up and she was kind of just like, "I don't know"...but she was like "I'm so good at so many things, like I'm good at sports, I do track, I do basketball, volleyball." So she's like in all these sports and she's like "I'm good at everything, I do well at everything and so I don't know if that's something that I want to do." And so he was like so do you want to be a professional athlete and play volleyball or basketball or whatever in college and she was just like, "I was thinking about that and I'm not sure because I don't necessarily know what happens when my careers over? What skills am I going to have?" And she's like already recognizing this idea that if I'm a student athlete like I'm not going to learn, like I'm not going to be able to focus on my studies and I won't have a skill. Like I won't be able to get a job. Cause she says, "I don't want that to be the only thing that I do. So I don't think I'm going to play sports in college because I want to be able to say I can do other things." I was like wow! That is something very different than what I'm used to hearing coming from youth of color. A lot of them. And also, their parents push them, you need to play sports in college so you can get a scholarship and she's like, "I don't know if that's something that I want to do." So she's constantly like thinking about these things, that's Nia I'm assuming. She also said, "I don't like to be doing the same thing because I get bored." So she said, "So that's why I won't be here every week of the program because I have other things that I'm going to do this summer because I get bored so easily."

So I don't know if she shut down because once Ms. Morgana walked in she got bored or what, but she shut down and Ms. Vicki talked to her. I'm assuming she gave her an ultimatum, told her to go back in the room. She came back in the room. They were doing the push-pull exercise where they had to interlock hands

and lean on each other and go back and forth and say words that rhyme like dip, dop, doe and they had to like go back and forth and say those words and as they said those words they had to lean into the person they were saying it to and the person saying it back had to lean in and they did it in partners. She partnered with her brother, her older brother Red, and she wasn't doing it right and Ms. Vicki came back in and saw her doing that and said, "mmmm-mmmmm she's gonna need another partner." So Ms. Morgana said, "oh she can be partners with me" And so she was being partners with her but she was still not doing what she was supposed to be doing, she was still not fully participating she was kind of just like not leaning in, not saying the words or waiting until after everyone was done saying the words and then saying it. Even though she was supposed to be enunciating it, she was saying it very quietly under her breath. Actively resisting what the exercise was. Ms. Vicki, came in saw it again but she wasn't physically in the room, she was standing in the sound booth of the theater and all I hear is,

"THAT'S IT NIA, GET YOUR SHIT. GET OUT."

That's what I heard. Really stern voice. Really like I'm upset, I'm angry. Almost as if like I just gave you an ultimatum and you came back in here and acted in a way that I just told you wasn't what I was looking for so you need to go. So I'm like sitting here just observing like, okay well there's Nia. I'm assuming that means that she's leaving for the day and maybe she'll come back tomorrow with a fresh start but after theatre was over and they were going to lunch, I saw Ms. Vicki sitting up at the front desk and she told me. She's like yea, "she's gotta go, she can't be here anymore." She told me, "she does this every summer, every summer she does this so, so and so's coming to get her and she's gonna go"...The thing about Nia that Ms. Vicki told me, she said, "it's really crazy because she's extremely talented, she is so talented" and she said "in so many ways" and I was like, that was the exact thought process that I was having. Just hearing her speak, hearing her thought processes that she has about the world around her, listening to the poetry that she wrote, watching her dance during hip-hop dance. Like she can dance, she can do all of it and I didn't see her do any drawings or anything but they said she can draw really well as well. So I was like oh my gosh, she's so talented and she needs to be here but maybe she's right, she gets bored. She's been in the program since she was really young and maybe it's just, I'm over it now and I want to do something different now.

- Aishia's Field Notes

After having conversations with Ms. Clark the next day I realized that I was not the only one empathizing with Nia. That morning Ms. Clark shared with me that Nia wanted to be at another summer camp but was not able to attend because she did not have

transportation there. Ms. Clark stepped in as an advocate for Nia and called her mother to ask her if she did not mind dropping Nia off at the other summer camp each morning. Her mother agreed and I was told that Nia attended the summer camp the following day.

While I never saw Nia again for the rest of the program, a number of the teachers brought her up during their interview as an example of a very talented young person who progressed through the program easily. Harold expressed that he wanted Nia to have the role of working as a teaching assistant this summer.

But if you look at like poetry, if you look at Nia's theme around flowers, and I'm just like why are some of these not like published. So again because life is not challenging her, it's really where we're losing her. And she's finding other things to explore, sexuality. I mean she and I have talked about everything, on would you like to talk to a white lesbian, you know, and what is it like to maybe smoke weed. But its like I've [done all this other stuff already] ... It really is unfortunate for Nia but honestly I don't think we can serve Nia in a way that she needs to be served. I mean she should be a TA, if she's going to be there, she needs to be a TA... It's [her behavior that's] not in check. But honestly I think if she had the responsibility, she would pick it up and do what she needs to do. But other than that it's not.

- Harold

After hearing Harold say this, I began to think about how the program attempts to serve all the Black youth living in South Dallas but for youth like Nia, who participated in the program for an entire decade, there are times when the program can no longer be of service to them. This is not an indication that the program failed Nia. I believe that the program simply did what it was set out to do because on the very first day I met Nia she exhibited all of the program outcomes, including a development of critical consciousness, a sense of pride in Black culture, and knowledge of African and African-American history. Nia recognized that she learned everything she could possibly learn at the SAAC program and was ready to move on to something new. This story is a bit

different than most of the youth that attend the program from a young age and continue participating well into their high school years because these youth become teaching assistants. Since Nia was not given that opportunity as a result of her behavior in previous summers, she did not want to be there. Although it was a struggle, Vicki recognized this and allowed her to go.

Nia's story is significant to the ways in which radical care is enacted at the SDCC because of its connection to the child development concept of scaffolding. Spencer and Rhodes (2014) discuss the role of scaffolding within youth development programs when they write,

To fully capitalize on these opportunities for youth learning and skill development, however, adults must be *intentional* in their interactions with youth. Vygotsky described a "zone of proximal development" in which learning takes place: beyond what a child or adolescent can attain when problem solving independently but when the range of what he or she can do while working under adult guidance or with more capable peers. Through this type of collaborative learning, youth can also refine new thinking skills and become more receptive to adult values, advice, and perspectives (p. 64).

Once youth reach the zone of proximal development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky (1980), adults generally step in to do what is referred to as scaffolding. The act of scaffolding provides assistance to youth to give them a boost or push forward to achieve the task at hand (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Ms. Vicki was intentional with her interactions with Nia in the incident described above and throughout her time attending the SAAC program because she made sure to set expectations with her. When Ms. Vicki pulled Nia out of the room and spoke with her the first time, she was reminding Nia of her expectations and when Nia came back in the room and continued to not meet those expectations she was asked to leave the space.

The intentionality behind asking Nia to leave the space is a form of scaffolding because Ms. Vicki recognized that Nia had learned all that she could at the SAAC program and it was time for her to apply the knowledge outside of the SDCC. I consider the action of asking Nia to leave the SDCC as a push or a boost for Nia to go out into the community and apply and share the knowledge that she gained in SAAC program. While this was not the first time Vicki asked a young person to leave the program, I reflected on the fact that all of the staff members had an understanding that Nia would always be welcomed back.

When expectations are not met one of the very last options that the program managers use is to ask that young person to leave the program but they always leave after being told that they are more than welcome to come back. The time period between when a young person is asked to leave the program and when they are allowed to come back depends on the dialogue between that young person, their parent or guardian, and the program managers. The program managers shared that some youth are asked to take a break from the program for a week and some youth are asked to come back and try again next summer. It all depended on how many expectations that young person did not meet and how willing they are to make changes so they can meet the expectations set out for them.

Adult staff members mentioned that they saw a difference between how other summer programs that serve youth respond to the lack of meeting expectations. Kim, who had attended the program as a young person and currently worked as one of the African dance teachers, explained that the staff focused on youth learning about taking

responsibility for their actions as oppose to just being told to sit in the corner if or when they did something wrong.

But I see the difference between summer camps at the Y or at Head Star versus here, Mr. Harold is real, Miss Vicky is real. They don't coddle you, they tell you just how it is. And that's what these children need. They don't need to be coddled and thinking, "Oh, it's okay for you to act like that." We'll just sit you out real quick for like five minutes and that's it. The real world is not like that. The real world is not going to let you sit out in five minutes. You're going to get into trouble right then and right there for what you did. You're going to have to take responsibility for what you did. And that's the difference that I see between the two.

- Kim

Ms. Isaac, the early literacy teacher at the SAAC program, explained that whether youth met expectations or not was a representation of her. In other words, if a young person was not meeting the expectations Ms. Isaac set out for them, they were not representing her well because she viewed her students as extensions of who she was.

With me, [when] you leave me, you represent me. And so you are an extension of me, so babe I'm going to give you all or I ain't going to give you nothing. That's just me...And I have very high expectations of all of my children. I'm very firm, but I don't care where you go, there's discipline.

- Ms. Isaac

This attitude around expectations established a sense of community between the youth and the adult teachers. Although none of the program managers explicitly stated that the youth represented the SDCC, this was an understood expectation and any time a young person did not meet this expectation there were consequences.

Kijana provided another example of what happens when a young person does not meet the expectations set out for them.

One that would probably be most fitting for the time that we're living in is the whole idea of sexting. And we had one child who—he's in a peculiar situation because I don't believe he lives with his mom. And he... he would act out for

attention, but he didn't know exactly how to get it. And I guess being kind of odd with the girls and everything, he actually sexted. And at that point you know we have a legal responsibility to report it to the parents and so on and so forth. So all that happened, and the idea was that he would never be allowed back to the center again. But, this child, having grown up in the center; and having worked to mend relationships; and to get that approval, is back, is actually helping and volunteering and teaching this year.

And basically it's like he wasn't allowed to fall through the cracks. He made a mistake, he knows better and it would be a loss for us as an organization. And then also, you know, just to leave him in the community, it would not be a good thing, because what a lot of kids suffer from growing up is rejection and they don't know how to place it. We all get it throughout life, but rejection is huge and just to think of a child being rejected from not just one person, but a whole organization and groups of people; parents and children and, you know, that's a lot. So I am—that's a caring relationship. He's been welcomed back in, he's admitted, he knows it was wrong and he's actually striving to do better. So he actually knows and gets the confirmation that people do care about him and we do love him.

- Kijana

After hearing this story I realized what radical care looks like as it relates to meeting expectations within the space of the SDCC. When a young person fails to meet expectations they are asked to leave but this break away serves as an opportunity to mend or makeup for any wrong they did. The act of asking a young person to leave is scaffolding or pushing them to new levels so when or if they come back, they hold more skills that advance them through their development. Similar to when someone fails to meet the expectations of a parent or guardian, youth have to deal with the consequences, but they are never completely barred from ever coming back to the SDCC because of the existence of radical care within that space.

It is radical care that creates the action of scaffolding a young person to meet expectations. This form of care as it relates to meeting expectations is vital to the development of Black youth living in marginalized communities because when they are

navigating other systems like the education system and they fail to meet expectations, they are generally barred from the space. Applying the SJYD framework to this analysis of radical care at the SDCC I argue that this display of care upholds the SJYD requirement of recognizing the “societal forces that significantly influence the day-to-day lives of urban youth” (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Radical care is vital to the development of Black youth, like Nia, because it 1) recognizes that Black youth struggle for their identities in oppressive environments and 2) provides a form of care that gives them knowledge and a sense of power to respond to and navigate those oppressive environments.

Without a space of refuge that enacts radical care for Black youth, like Nia, the lack of meeting expectations places them in oppressive environments like alternative schools or juvenile justice centers where they are rarely given the opportunity to use their voice and have their personal and community needs met. The SDCC pushes against this in order to maintain a safe space of refuge where a young person feels like they are cared for regardless of what they do. While the youth are always invited back if they fail to meet expectations at the SAAC program, the adult teachers are not allotted this privilege.

Adult Staff Meeting Expectations

As the program manager, Ms. Vicki sets out certain expectations for the staff members she hires to teach the SAAC program classes. These expectations are focused on assuring the children and youth enrolled in the program are truly gaining knowledge, skills, and exhibiting the program outcomes. During her interview she describes

selecting staff as a delicate process because the children and youth are the first priority of the program.

So, you know, choosing staff becomes a very delicate kind of thing because I've had people come and I've had to let them go because they didn't understand that, you know, the children really do come first here and I don't give a damn about you. You know, if you can't figure out that this is a place where the children are top of the heap and we're there to serve them, then you need to go somewhere else. I have had people come in who didn't want to do the work to learn what they needed to learn and they found out that no, it ain't about, I don't care how accomplished you are in whatever art form you bring to the table, if you don't do the research that helps give the cultural ground, then you've got to go. So that is one of the things that I think is about caring. Is caring about the mission of this place. Then it's caring about, because it's not, we don't just do children obviously.

- Ms. Vicki

After my initial meeting with the program managers at the SDCC Ms. Vicki emailed me a number of documents and web links to articles to read about the topic the SAAC program would be covering during the summer of 2015. She told me that every staff member received this email and were expected to develop their curriculum and classroom activities around this information. Since the focus of the SAAC program for 2015 was to study modern day Senegal, staff members were required to read about topics related to the current president of the Senegal and his poetry, the popularity of wrestling for youth living in Senegal, the street theater performed in the capital city of Senegal, and the hip-hop culture that currently exist in Senegal.

I found all of the reading to be extremely valuable before I began to conduct the case study that summer but after having conversations with Ms. Vicki I realized that some of the staff members did not necessarily take the reading seriously and attempted to construct their own curriculum without using information from the readings. As she

stated above, Ms. Vicki has no problem asking staff members to leave the program if they refuse to incorporate the research on the particular topic being covered that summer. While I did not experience this happening during the time I conducted this case study, I believe it's important to note that these expectations are set for the staff members and if they are not met, staff members are asked to leave and not come back. For Ms. Vicki, as the program manager, her focus is on the children and youth in the program and if the adult staff members are not providing what is expected of them, it affects the children and youth in the program.

This was also a form of radical care in that Ms. Vicki only hires and keeps staff members that care about the children and youth that they serve. Caring for the children and youth in the program to Ms. Vicki meant that adult staff members were not only applying the specific topic for that summer to their curriculum, it also meant that they were looking for any issues that the children and youth may be facing and seeking ways to combat these issues. Ms. Vicki provides two examples of this during her interview when she says:

Well I see it in the way in which the faculty prepares for the summer program. You know if they really care, then they don't come half-stepping. I see it in the way that they look out for issues with the children, so that it's never a just sort of slough it over or they're just a bad kid or whatever. Everybody is really trying to see how they can be supportive and helpful in this program and I see it in things like Liz, who, when she decided she wanted to get her dyslexia training, part of that was she knew what she could do for our program because she was seeing so many kids coming through with issues and she coming to me and saying "hey, I'm going to be doing this, I'd love for us to be able to use this in the program" you know, and I was like "whatever you think needs to happen Liz, you're the early childhood specialist, so whatever you think." You know, so those kinds of things that...Kijana, Kijana got us on those books. You know, we were doing art books and it was nice and everything. I mean she took that to a whole different level and like I said they come to me and they say, "You know what? I think we

can do something different, I think we can". And if it's a good idea we fly with it. And so that to me is caring about what, her thing was when these children see their stuff in print in a book they can buy on Amazon, that's going to give them a whole different sense of urgency about doing their best work and it definitely has
- Ms. Vicki

While Ms. Vicki was not as forgiving to adult staff members who did not meet her expectations, she was still enacting radical care for the children, youth, families, and the South Dallas community by only allowing the best teachers and staff members to work at the SAAC program. In the same way a mother or father would remove individuals that hinder the development of their child or youth, Ms. Vicki did the same with the staff of the program.

"Competence in caring is an essential aspect of the practice of care, without which one has only concern and good intentions" (Rauner, 2000, p. 57). Radical care is connected to the importance of competent care where the focus is on the action of meeting a need (Rauner, 2000). In this sense, competence involves assessing for where care is needed and executing an action. This is connected to radical care because competent care involves an in-depth assessment of where care is needed and this involves applying SJYD and 1) recognizing the oppressive forces that hinder positive development for youth of color and 2) providing these youth with the space to heal from their trauma wounds inflicted by the oppressive forces. Ms. Vicki recognizes the oppressive forces the youth of South Dallas navigate and she engages in competent care when demands that the staff meet her expectations and follow the philosophy of care that she adopts for the SDCC to exist and sustain as a space of refuge.

Resistance: Free Summer Lunch Program

Just because they're poor and they're Black doesn't mean you can feed them shit.

- Ms. Clark, SDCC Education Coordinator

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) attempts to combat child hunger by providing their National School Lunch Program (NSLP) for children and youth during the school year. The NSLP provides free or reduced lunches to children and youth in the United States whose parents or guardians qualify for assistance. Access to this assistance is based on the income of the parents or guardians and according to the Texas Department of Agriculture, a household of four must have an income of less than \$31,525 in order to qualify for the free lunch program and this income requirement is based on the federal poverty guidelines (Texas Department of Agriculture, 2015). However, when the school year ends, so does the NSLP and in order to continue fighting child hunger the USDA created a program to provide lunch for children and youth during the summer months.

Superior Food Services⁵, a sponsor funded by the USDA's summer food service program (SFSP), provided lunch each day of the program during the summer of 2015. The SFSP is a "federally-funded and state-administered program [that]... reimburses providers who serve healthy meals to children and teens in low-income areas at no charge primarily during the summer months when school is not in session" (USDA, 2015). SFSP's goal is to ensure that children and youth that utilize the free or reduced

⁵ Superior Food Services is pseudonym for the SFSP sponsor that delivered lunch to the SDCC each day.

lunch program during the school year do not go hungry during the summer months when school is not in session (USDA, 2015).

SFSP state agencies work as the administrators for the program and these agencies recruit sponsors who run the SFSP program (USDA, 2015). SFSP sponsors can be schools, local government agencies, camps, faith-based organizations, and other non-profits that have the ability to manage the food service program (USD, 2015). The SFSP also has sites or places in the community where “children receive meals in a safe and supervised environment” (USDA, 2015). During the time this case study was conducted, Superior Food Services was registered as a SFSP sponsor with the state of Texas and the South Dallas Cultural Center was registered as a SFSP site.

While the purpose of the USDA’s SFSP is to provide healthy meals to children and youth in low-income areas, the children, youth, and program staff at the center realized that the food being served was not fulfilling that purpose. By not providing healthy meals, the USDA’s SFSP placed harm on the youth in the program and as a response to this harm, SDCC employed the tactic of resistance. This section of the chapter will cover how program staff actively engaged in resistance towards the food service agency as a form of enacting radical care.

Program activities ran smoothly for the first couple days of the program but there was one issue that the children and youth complained about on the second day. The complaints shed light on how youth and the program staff resist structural oppression and advocate for local community change. I use the term structural oppression here to illustrate the ways in which structures like the United States government, who take on

the responsibility to provide services like free food programs to low-income communities, oppress individuals and communities through the very services created to help them. The ways in which the staff reacted to the issue around the quality of the food from the SFSP provides insight on how the particular program processes involve enacting radical care. This care was enacted to work towards community and structural changes that address access to healthy food for low-income children and youth.

On the second day of the program the staff noticed that the children and youth were not happy about the lunch provided by the SFSP. After hearing their complaints, Ms. Clark asked the representative from Superior Food Services in charge of serving the food for a serving of lunch. Once Ms. Clark tasted the lunch, she was very displeased and mentioned how much salt tasted in the food. Ms. Vicki was notified and immediately contacted the manager of Superior Food Services. On the third day of the program, I forgot to pack my lunch and decided to have some of the lunch provided to the children and youth in the program. I described the lunch, which was beef stroganoff that day, as "it looked like slop and tasted like salt" in my field notes and I soon realized that I was not the only person unhappy about the food.

Youth Attitudes towards the Food

Youth in the program openly discussed their attitudes towards the food during interviews. Most youth were completely displeased with the food while Devante', a teaching assistant, spoke about being grateful for the food provided.

Yea, they don't, they don't understand. They don't understand that its like you don't have to eat. Like you can just come here, they can give you a sandwich and send you home but they give, like they give a full course meal and plus snack. Like its hot, you ain't gotta warm it up, its hot, you get fruit, you get meat and

vegetables, and, and plus a salad and a drink. Like, its like they don't have to give you anything so appreciate it while you have it cause in a certain amount of time, you won't have it no more. So like I mean like, why complain about it, saying it's disgusting or something, it don't need nothing but a little salt and pepper. That's it, you can bring some salt and pepper from home and put it in your pocket and put it on your food. That ain't nothing. Like, like its Yea like just appreciate cause like the, cause the food can be just like school food. School food is something they think you should give to a dog I mean hey and this food is better than that.

- Devante'

Devante' was grateful he had a free meal to eat each day during the program but his feelings of gratefulness were not shared amongst the other youth in the program. Banie, a teaching assistant, stated *"To be honest, I don't know the reason why they would feed us food like that."* Another young person in the program, Bug, expressed how the food made her feel ill after eating.

That lunch is NASTY! They would have my stomach hurting, and the they sometime, it don't even have no flavor to it. When [they] do bring something good it don't it be just a lil' bit, and you can only have [it] once, but they always bring enough of the nasty food to seconds, to have seconds for us.

- Bug

While Banie and Bug were both displeased with the food being served, another youth participant, Life, mentioned how she was both grateful and displeased for the SFSP food. Life loved coming to the program to learn new things but was not enjoying the food.

Salad's nasty. I mean, I'm not complaining, I'm grateful-what I have but, it's disgusting and it's just like it's like slop. Like, they give us the rest the leftovers. Everything else, like the culture center's cool. I like it. I like how we do activities. I like how we do a lot of things like music. Uh, we learn about hip-hop and Senegal. Like they have thirty-six languages, and they have only two seasons, wet and dry. So, I learned a lot of things. But, the main thing I really don't like is about the food. It's just nasty.

- Life

While many of the youth participants complained about the quality of the food, Blue provided solutions he felt would make the lunch better.

Like say I had like the pasta mostly every day, and it's like some kids they want like the salad. They should like, give us like chef salads instead of like them little pieces of lettuce. People who want like the pasta and stuff, they can get that. Then they can have like one day, we just get all salad. Like, every kid gets salad. It got like kinda, some kinda like little pieces of meat in it and like some lettuce, cheese and stuff like that in it.

- Blue

Blue offering solutions to the issues around the food being served at the SAAC program provided insight on the fact that the meals needed to be healthier.

A number of the complaints from the youth participants about the food were related to it tasting nasty or there not being enough food for everyone to have larger portions and the adult staff members had issues with the unhealthy food as well. Most of the lunches served were high in sodium and sugar. Two dishes that were served almost every week of the program were the chicken enchiladas and green beans. After tasting both dishes myself and asking the children and youth how they felt it tasted, we all concluded that the chicken enchiladas were covered in a very salty gravy/soup mixture and the green beans were extremely sweet, almost as if the individual preparing them put sugar in it. While some of the children and youth said these dishes tasted good, the staff members were not pleased by the unhealthy food and they voiced their displeasure during the very first week of the program.

Meeting with the USDA Free Summer Lunch Program Representative

On the fourth day of the program I found myself sitting in the room where the teen group classes are held with Ms. Clark, Ms. Vicki, and Ms. Kijana. We were all

sitting around a table discussing poems that a youth participant wrote earlier that day. Our discussion was interrupted when a representative from Superior Food Services walked into the room. She held a clipboard and a journal in her hand. Ms. Vicki invited her to sit down with us and expressed her excitement of her presence. She asked if the Superior Food Services manager sent her out to the SDCC because she called them earlier in the day with complaints about the food. The representative told her that she dropped by to complete the first required weekly check to assure they are receiving the food they ordered based on the contract. Ms. Vicki expressed her displeasure with the food and talked about how she expected food that was healthier than what was served each day. The representative looked at the paperwork on her clipboard and stated that the food brought to the center today were chicken enchiladas and that it included a protein, the chicken, bread, the tortilla, and a vegetable, the salad mix. Ms. Vicki mentioned that the food did not look like chicken enchiladas and that it looked more like chicken soup. Ms. Clark agreed and asked the representative if she had tasted the food that was brought to the center today and the representative said that she had not. Ms. Clark told her that she needed to try tasting the food because it was very salty.

The representative apologized that the food was not meeting their expectations and noted that she would take the complaints back to the manager of the agency. She asked everyone in the room if there was anything specific that she wanted us to let the manager know and Ms. Clark stated, *“We had this same problem last year and complained about it and we were promised better food this year but this stuff is slop. This stuff isn’t even edible. The food that you’re serving is not for human consumption.”*

The representative opened her journal and began to write down, word for word, what Ms. Clark was saying. Ms. Vicki had to step out of the room to attend a meeting but Ms. Clark continued to talk with the representative. The representative wanted to know what kind of food the program would like to have delivered each day. Ms. Clark mentioned that the grilled chicken, seasoned rice, and salad delivered on Monday was a great healthy meal but the enchiladas and beef stroganoff were both very salty and the noodles from the beef stroganoff were overcooked. Ms. Clark then stated, *“Just because they’re poor and they’re Black doesn’t mean that you can feed them shit.”* Ms. Clark was very transparent about how upset the quality of the food made her and even told the representative from Superior Food Services that she was just going to tell Ms. Vicki to find someone else to make the food next year. She mentioned that she knew that Superior Food Services was funded through federal dollars from the USDA and she did not mind contacting her political representatives to notify them that the federal funds were being used to make slop. After taking all of the notes the agency representative left the room and Ms. Clark continued to talk about how she was not okay with the fact that this agency was using federal dollars to feed the children and youth in the program unhealthy processed food.

Listening to Ms. Clark express her displeasure with Superior Food Services pushed me to think about how the resistance against Superior Food Services is another way adult staff enact radical care. Although Superior Food Services had good intentions to feed the children and youth in the program for free, these good intentions were not met with what they promised to provide, a healthy lunch and snack every day of the

program. When Ms. Clark says, “*just because they’re poor and they’re Black does not mean that you can feed them shit,*” she is critiquing the ways in which federal institutions (i.e., USDA) attempt to provide a service, like a free food program, but end up serving unhealthy processed food that can lead to negative health effects in the future. Resisting against Superior Food Services by demanding that they provide healthier food is how Ms. Clark advocated for the well-being and the health of children and youth attending the program. After this meeting Ms. Vicki and Ms. Clark decided that they would look for another SFSP sponsor to serve lunch and snack for next summer’s program. Unfortunately, this meant that the children and youth in the program that summer continued to consume the unhealthy processed food for the rest of the summer.

When Good Intentions Become Structural Social Toxins

Based on my own experiences with the food and the complaints the youth provided, I began to ask staff members about their attitudes towards the food as the weeks of the program progressed. I predicted that I would hear the same complaints that I was getting from the youth participants but I realized that I was wrong after having a conversation one day with one of the adult staff members.

Pam worked as the staff member that oversaw the lunch period each day and as well as the special projects teacher. During the fifth week of the program I found out from Pam that the children and youth were not always given fresh milk and juice with their lunch and snack each day of the program. The excerpt from my field notes below recall how Pam found out that Superior Food Services was serving the children and youth spoiled milk and fermented juice.

Today during snack time I walked into the kitchen to get my snack out of the refrigerator and one of the second grade participants walked up to Ms. Pam and said, "Ms. Pam, this milk taste bad." Ms. Pam took the milk, smelled it, and told the second grader to throw it in the trash and get another milk out of the cooler. I said, "oh no, is it spoiled?" Ms. Pam told me that some of the milk cartons that are brought to the center with the lunch have spoiled milk in them. She told me that Superior Food Services might be leaving the milk out too long when its transported to the center each day. I told her how surprised I was to know that they would serve the children and youth spoiled milk. She then told me a story about how one day during snack time the children and youth complained about the apple and orange juice smelling and tasting like beer. She tasted the juice out of one of the apple juice cartons and realized that the juice was fermented."

- Aishia's Field Notes

Although this conversation occurred during the final week of the SAAC program and the program managers had already made the decision to find another SFSP sponsor to provide lunch and snack next year, I was still very surprised that Superior Food Services would serve spoiled milk and fermented juice to youth in the program. By the fifth week of the program I had learned more about the South Dallas community and through that knowledge I began to think about how the food was connected to the social toxins in the radical healing model (Ginwright, 2010a).

Social toxins are described as both structural and interpersonal where the more structural toxins (i.e., violence, poverty, or domestic abuse) that exist, the more likely a young person will have interpersonal toxins (i.e., depression, fear, anger, and pain) (Ginwright, 2010a). Based on the site observations and interviews, I argue that Superior Food Services worked as a structural social toxin at the SDCC. This lack of access to healthy food is connected to the structural social toxin of poverty. Poverty is associated with lack of access to quality healthy foods as a result of many individuals living in poverty have trouble affording and accessing nutritious food.

All public schools located in the South Dallas community are a part of the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) and the children and youth enrolled in the SAAC program attend schools in South Dallas, with the exception of five or six children and youth. In 2014, DISD received approval from the USDA to provide free lunch to all students enrolled in DISD schools. Prior to 2014, 89% of students enrolled in DISD schools received free or reduced lunch (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Based on this information and the fact that the SAAC program is only open to children and youth that attend South Dallas schools, many of the children and youth in the program are in need of free lunch during the summer. There are a number of campaigns promoting healthier school lunches in the United States like the *Healthy Schools Campaign*. This campaign advocates for a change in the nutrition of the food provided in school lunches. The same issues related to food quality that exists with school lunches presented themselves at the SAAC program. Clark and Fox (2009) reported that while the USDA National School Lunch Program (NSLP) reduced nutrition inadequacy, there was still an increase in the prevalence of excessive sodium and saturated fat intake.

According to the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) "High Sodium Intake in Children and Adolescents: Cause for Concern" factsheet, high sodium intake among children and adolescents leads to high blood pressure which a risk factor for heart disease and stroke in adulthood (2013). The CDC also recommends that everyone should try to reduce their intake of foods high in saturated fat as it can lead to diseases like heart disease, stroke, and diabetes (2015). The same government institution, the USDA, that funds the foods being served for school lunch's funds the food for the summer program

and sets the nutrition guidelines in the United States. Despite these policies, USDA awards grants to NSLP and SFSP state agencies and sponsors that are not providing quality healthy food to the recipients of their free services.

While the USDA and the agencies that receive federal dollars to implement their programs have great intentions of feeding children who are not getting the free lunch they usually receive during the school year, the results of these intentions could have ill long-term effects on their health. Serving foods high in sodium and saturated fat like the chicken enchiladas and beef stroganoff served at the program can predispose youth to heart disease and diabetes. The Diabetes Health and Wellness Institute, strategically located at the Juanita J. Craft Recreation Center in South Dallas, reports that the community of South Dallas has the highest rates of diabetes and heart disease in Dallas County (Baylor Scott & White Health, n.d.). This information is significant as the children and youth are given food that predisposes them to these diseases through these USDA funded programs. While this institute provides resources to individuals suffering from these health issues, youth development programs like the SAAC program diligently set up prevention strategies so the children and youth in the South Dallas community will not need the institute when they enter into adulthood.

One prevention strategy used at the SAAC program was biweekly cooking classes for some of the youth in the program during the summer of 2015. The cooking classes focused on youth learning how to make traditional Senegalese dishes to prepare at home. Each dish the youth prepared included a carbohydrate, a protein, and vegetables and they learned about the healthy eating habits of West African people. However, the

lunch that the children and the youth ate every day did not promote those healthy eating habits. The SAAC staff attempted to promote healthy eating habits in the youth that attended the biweekly cooking classes and their parents or guardians who were members of the South Dallas community. The goal of the biweekly cooking classes was to promote knowledge of African culture but also promote healthy eating in the South Dallas community. This was one way the SAAC program resisted Superior Food Services and enacted radical care for communal survival.

Radical care was also enacted when program staff resisted the food agency because it was harming the well-being of the children, youth, families, and the community. Although resistance did not make direct change during the summer of 2015, the decision was made to find a different agency for the following summer. The staff truly cared about the type of food their children and youth participants were consuming as opposed to just ignoring their complaints and telling them to be grateful for the food they are given. This is important to note because youth are given an opportunity to observe how oppression affects them first-hand and the adult staff illuminate this by advocating for better quality food. After revisiting Ms. Clark's statement presented at the opening of this chapter, it is clear she using SJYD to address the issue of government institutions preying on the powerless like children, youth, and the poor communities. In order for spaces of refuge to remain, resistance against structural social toxins like the perpetuation of poverty by the USDA SFSP must occur. Ginwright refers to the removal of social toxins as social detoxification and he writes that it "involves removing or neutralizing harmful elements in a social setting" (2010a, p. 16). In order for youth to get

through the radical healing process to achieve wellness, these spaces of refuge must enact radical care to detoxify the space and the SAAC program did this by fighting for access to quality healthy foods that will provide children and youth with components of a healthy development into adulthood.

Survival Tactics: The Role of Anti-Policy to Maintain Spaces of Refuge

Survival Tactics

The radical healing model is grounded in the supposition that black youth living in urban areas continuously face institutional and systemic oppression that create structural and interpersonal social toxins (Ginwright, 2010a). Radical care is used to facilitate the radical healing process for Black youth (Ginwright, 2010a). After finding out about the so-called “riot” discussed in Chapter II that took place at Dade Middle School just before the SAAC program began, I realized that youth in South Dallas were experiencing institutional oppression when they were pepper sprayed by Dallas Independent School District police officers. This led me to closely examine the significance of the tactics that the SAAC program utilize to assist children and youth survive as they navigate the institutions that oppress them. It was clear that radical care was the justification behind the use of these survival tactics. Radical care is needed for youth to continue to navigate institutional oppression and SDCC staff actively used tactics to help the youth survive this navigation. This section of the chapter will focus on the ways in which the SAAC program implemented survival tactics and worked against

racist policies in order to enact radical care and maintain the SDCC as a space of refuge for the children, youth, families, and community that they serve in South Dallas.

The SAAC program works against institutional oppression in a number of ways and one specific way is through not perpetuating what is referred to as the school-to-prison pipeline. This term is used to refer to the process that many educational institutions put youth of color through that eventually places them as prison inmates in adulthood. This pipeline is defined as

A journey through school that is increasingly punitive and isolating for its travelers—many of whom will be placed in restrictive special education programs, repeatedly suspended, held back in grade, and banished to alternative, “outplacements” before finally dropping or getting “pushed out” of school altogether (Wald & Loosen, 2003, p.3).

One of the biggest ways that the school-to-prison pipeline continues to push youth out of school and into prisons is through the use of “zero tolerance” policies (Wald & Loosen, 2003).

A school that uses zero tolerance policies as a tool for discipline implement these policies by enacting tactics like punishing youth with suspension, expulsion, and even written tickets by law enforcement that push them into the juvenile justice system. Black and Latino/a children and youth are much more likely to face these forms of punishment from schools as a result of these zero-tolerance policy practices (Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda, 2015). As Black and Latino/a youth are being pushed out of schools, they are sometimes also being pushed out of community-based and recreational programs.

The policies set in place in education systems like zero tolerance policies are sometimes adopted by recreation and after-school programs. For example, policies like

“no pass, no play” prevent youth from being involved in sport activities without considering factors that may lead to a young person not passing their classes, like consistently being suspended from school. Even some after-school programs implement policies that do not allow young people to attend the after-school program if they were truant or failed to attend school that day. While these policies seem fair, they fail to consider the fact that youth of color face more serious forms of punishment in school than their white counterparts. These unjust practices are not only pushing youth of color out of schools, they are also pushing youth of color out of recreation and after-school programs.

The SDCC enacts radical care by refuting these policies. Harold, the assistant manager at the SDCC, recognizes the effect these policies have on the children and youth that attend the SAAC program every summer and below he states how he works to make sure they do not have these experiences during the program.

So one of the things that I always stress in terms of... because I do the part on discipline, it's this thing... there are a lot of policies that we are anti. Having a child, kicking out a child, if we go to that far and say, "Don't come back to our program." That is beyond last resort. We have tried everything. Most of the stuff we try to handle internally because we know most of you [parents] are on the job. You know what I'm saying? It's just not convenient. So I mean, we don't want to interrupt your day. We will if we feel like it's necessary information. Then maybe we'll try just let's take a day at home, or something. But then if things got—and most of it comes not necessarily in behavior, you know, as we expect. I mean we're cultivating creatives.

- Harold

As the staff member over discipline during the SAAC program, Harold does not believe that children and youth in the program should be disciplined through expulsion. He views this as the absolute last resort. Earlier in this chapter I mentioned the fact that if

and when a young person is removed from the program they are always invited to come back, but the actual act of removing a child from the program is extremely rare. This is related to the ways in which the SAAC program approaches discipline.

Radical care is enacted when staff members work to invest in a young person's creativity as oppose to focusing on their behaviors and disciplining them for their behaviors. Harold does not place too much emphasis on behavior because he recognizes that exhibiting behavior that is out of the ordinary or does not align with societal norms is a part of the process when cultivating or developing what he refers to as "creatives," meaning youth that work best when their creativity is accepted. Harold also approaches discipline by using reformation strategies. For example, Harold recognizes that a lot of the youth attending the SAAC program get labeled as bullies at very young ages and he pushes against that and pays close attention to the language the staff use around bullying.

Am I a proponent of bullying? No. But again, the component of kick them out, you know, that's criminalization, right? So as much energy that I would invest in bullying, we invest in bully reform because what happened one year we had this kindergartener who we were labeling as a bully but, now, that child was four or five. He doesn't know his body in relationship to the smaller child. So we see it as a bully, he sees it as rough playing because I'm a big child. So from five on, we're going to call him a bully and I said, "No, we're not touching that." And so we're not going to be anti-bully, we're going to be bully reformed and things like that. And so language has a lot of power in it. This child doesn't even know what it means to be a bully. Probably can't spell bully. But can begin to identify with it just because that's what—you're bullying, you must just lighten up. So we got to take it out. That's not a policy of ours. But what else did are we—I'm sorry. What other things, you know, that we try, because we have to believe in reformation because most—the children that we seek to serve often are the ones that these policies affect the most. So our whole thing has to be around reformation, other strategies. Or else our whole aesthetic is not important.

- Harold

Harold actively resists zero tolerance policies by enacting strategies like changing the attitudes and language around bullying. Instead of saying the SAAC program is an anti-bully program, Harold labels it as a bully reform program. Changing this language and the approach used to handle this issue of bullying is one way that program staff resists the perpetuation of the school-to-prison pipeline but Harold realizes that there is room for improvement.

As the assistant program manager and staff member over discipline, Harold also recognizes that not all of the staff hired as teachers for the SAAC program follow the same approach he does around discipline. Harold recognizes that teachers should have training to better understand how to implement what he refers to as “anti-oppressive” ways to work with the children and youth of South Dallas.

I mean it's hard because we even try a lot of those policies and practices ourselves, so to actively work against them means to actively work against, you know, so we don't do it. And I think what will be the benefit is the more structure across the—I mean training across the board around anti-oppressive ways in teaching and teaching to transgress and things like that as a methodology so it's something that's ingrained in every person regardless of the type of instruction versus, you know, what you're saying. But yeah, it's like, you know, we don't have to be, let's do this.

- Harold

Based on Harold's statement above, I argue that enacting radical care also means confirming that teachers learn about policies that negatively affect the children and youth in the community and are trained on how to deliver strategies to not perpetuate these policies during the SAAC program. When teachers enact radical care by not perpetuating policies that negatively affect the children and youth they are implementing what I refer to as survival tactics.

During the five weeks that I spent at the SAAC program I began to understand that the violation or refusal to follow certain policies were not only performed as an act of resistance but was also used as a tool for communal survival. When we revisit Ginwright's (2010a) concept of radical care, communal survival is the reason community-based organizations and individuals in the community enact radical care. I conceptualize communal survival to include the survival of children and youth within the community. For the community as a whole to survive and thrive, individuals and organizations within the community must come together to assist not only families, but also the children and youth within those families. Utilizing this explanation of communal survival, I deconstruct the different ways staff members at the SDCC violated policies set by institutions like the City of Dallas to enact radical care for communal survival.

Car Rides to the SDCC: "My Liberation Is That Like I Get to Know Community"

And that's why for me engaging with them outside of this structure where you have to put on this front is important...and in unison when I drop them off, they say thank you, which is a value that a lot of kids—you know, in terms of gratitude. So they realize you're doing something. And I wouldn't say [I'm doing it] for them because my liberation is that like I get to know community and that's how I get to show—you know, so I'm not doing this for you. This is what we're doing together but again that gratitude, again.

- Harold, Assistant Program Manager

During the second week of the SAAC program I discovered that Harold, the assistant program manager, drove three brothers enrolled in the program to and from the SDCC in his personal car. I thought about the number of youth development settings I have worked in that have policies against providing youth with rides to and from the program in your personal car. I recognized that these youth development settings generally provide transportation in the form of a bus that drives program participants to

and from the program each day. If these youth development settings are not able to provide this form of transportation, they generally have policies that require parents and guardians to drop off and pick up their child each day. The SAAC did not have a bus to provide transportation to youth participants enrolled in the program. However, adult staff members built relationships with parents and guardians in order to learn more about their needs and the needs of the community.

While conducting Harold's interview I discovered that whenever these three brothers were absent a couple of days during the first week of the program a staff member called their mother and shared that everyone at the program missed them. After the staff member asked if there was anything they could do to help the family out, the mother admitted that her boys were not able to attend the program because she was not able to drive them there. This was when the staff member asked for permission to pick the young men up from their house to bring them to the program each morning and drop them off each evening after the program was over. Harold discusses the significance of providing transportation in his personal vehicle and how it's connected to enacting radical care for the South Dallas community.

So those open lines of communications. Again, asking critical questions that are beyond, you know, can you do this, will you do this? A lot of our stuff has always been community orientated, so it's getting to know the larger family communities, which also helps while we focus on South Dallas, because again if you see us in a grocery store, if you see us in public spaces, we go to church together. You see there is this village-like mentality that is about care. For me, it is finding opportunities to fill gaps. So if it is—I know Brian's mother is pretty surprised that this program has offered to pick up my child. And I mean like they want them there so bad, they're going to pick them up, they're going to take them home, you know what I'm saying? Because she had just decided they couldn't go because she couldn't get him there. And so the fact that they called and said what's going on? Okay, how can we—if you would give us permission. So I think and while

they may not avidly say, oh, you care about my child. I think they began to internalize the different level we're investing.

- Harold

For many youth development programs there are barriers that exist when attempting to navigate the community they serve. The City of Dallas youth program standards of care require that a program vehicle should be used when transporting youth to and from a city-sponsored activity (Dallas City Code, 2014). Harold using his personal car to drive these three youth participants was clearly in violation.

Harold viewed driving the youth to and from the SDCC each day as a form of investment not just in the youth but also in the community of South Dallas. In the opening quote of this section, Harold conceptualizes the action of providing transportation as communal, meaning that it is a shared experience. Having these shared experiences builds community, one of the four components of the radical healing model. This model proposes that community is created through recognition of collective struggle (Ginwright, 2010a). Harold views himself as a member of the South Dallas community and by describing the trip to and from the SDCC each day with these three youth as an action they are “doing together” he reframes how we view youth development programs and organizations that work with oppressed communities as a whole.

Harold does not view this reframing as a new and profound concept. He explains it as simply treating people in the community with care.

But for me it really—it's just how I socialize with people anyway. So I don't know, I don't think it's anything I'm doing extra special but it's just like I see people and I treat them as people. And I think it makes it easy but it's also just like a standard, you know. And I think when people have—and also there's a way in

which we try to operate from a non-hierarchy, so we're not special, you know what I'm saying? It's just like we're all on the same playing field, right. So we don't try to create fear amongst parents and respect, you know what I'm saying? So it's like I guess that's how you show you just care. And it's evident in a lot of different ways. But then those that we have to go "above and beyond," we just try to do what we can and don't really think much about it. So people, I mean, students knowing that definitely, I think the families know it. And the start of that is to—and I think it bleeds over into other aspects, cultural and community, because even—I don't know if I would share with you going back to this model, you know, picking up kids, take them to church, kind of deal. Those are old forms and models that—and typically the church would be in the community already so... and not for my church its far, but still I think those types of things.

- Harold

Going above and beyond by breaking policies and driving youth to and from the program in a personal car is a form of connecting with community. These forms of community connections provide insight on how programs like the SAAC have to ignore or work against policy to enact radical care for the youth that attend the program and the community as a whole. This involves recognizing that when these programs work with youth, they are working with community members. For this instance of policy violations that took place at the SAAC program, radical care was enacted to build relationships and bonds with community members that include the youth themselves and their families. After seeing Harold drive these three young people to and from the SDCC each day of the program, I realized that this was not the only way staff were violating policy to enact radical care.

Physically Performing Radical Care: Eye Rolls to the Side Hugs Policy

You know how we talk about doing side hugs in youth development programs and agencies. Well they don't do that here. On the first day of this program, adult program leaders were fully embracing the children, youth, and parents as they came through the door.

- Field Notes Day 1

On the very first day of site observations at the SAAC program I noticed that the adult staff members were displaying care in a way that I had never seen in a youth development setting. I noticed that their display of care violated some of the standard policies put in place for youth development programs and specifically summer camps. For example, I observed adult staff members fully embracing children, youth, and their parents or guardians as they walked through the front door. The American Camp Association (ACA) asks that all of their participating camp organizations establish a policy or set of guidelines related to acceptable interactions between campers and staff (ACA, n.d.) The ACA then goes on to state that, “If you allow such contact as hugs and high fives, you need to be very clear about what is acceptable” (ACA, n.d.).

While this policy protects camp organizations from legal trouble, it fails to recognize that some children and youth need these displays of affection to survive and thrive. Big Creative Bubble⁶, an organization that provides some of the funding for the SAAC program, adopted this policy for all youth programs that are recipients of their funding. Specifically, this organization required that staff members only perform side hugs if the children and youth enrolled in the program wanted to hug them. This policy is another example of a barrier that youth development programs face when building community and enacting radical care. The act of fully embracing a child was against policy but many staff members practiced this behavior and they practiced it often.

⁶ Big Creative Bubble is a pseudonym for this organization.

One day during the program I was sitting on a bench near the front desk of the SDCC and I overheard a staff member from Big Creative Bubble say, “*my job here is to make sure that everyone is doing side hugs...*” to an SAAC staff member. When I looked up, I saw another SAAC staff look at the Big Creative Bubble staff and roll her eyes. While this interaction happened in the span of five seconds I found the statement made about side hugs and the response from the SAAC staff member to be significant. As I stated earlier and in the opening quote of the section, it is clear that adult staff members at the SAAC program provide hugs to the children, youth, and all family members. I found it interesting that the staff member from one of the funding organizations did not recognize this as a common practice within this space of refuge known as the SDCC. This was not the first time that I heard about side hugs. As an individual that works in youth development settings and has trained many youth development professionals, I include the importance of side hugs in my trainings. Side hugs are generally implemented in order to ensure the safety of staff members and the youth in the program but while conducting this case study at the SDCC I was pushed to think critically about this policy of side hugs.

As I continued to collect data for this case study I consistently reflected on the action of hugging the youth at the program. On day ten of data collection for this case study I reflected on how hugs were related to enacting care in my field notes entry below.

In order to maintain caring relationships, you have to break the rules sometimes. You have to not give them a side hug. You have to maybe pick them up and put them over your shoulder and hold them close to you. You know, I'm just. You have to take them home because they got left at the center. I mean, who else is

gonna come get them?

- Aishia's Field Notes

On this day I was recalling an interaction I saw that morning where a child, who was going into first grade, walked out of the bathroom in tears and a staff member walked up to him and asked him what was wrong. The child responded, “I’m hungry. I didn’t have breakfast this morning.” The staff member then picked the child up, put him over his shoulder, and began to rub his back.

This interaction would be deemed as completely inappropriate and against policy in most youth development settings but it was both accepted and welcomed in the space of the SDCC. Later on that day, I spoke to that staff member and asked if that child was okay. They let me know that he was okay now and we had a discussion about how I viewed that interaction as a way the program staff enacts care. The staff member agreed and told me that sometimes you don’t know what’s going on at home. They went on to explain that sometimes, especially around the time right before most families get their food stamps, some parents are unable to provide breakfast to their children before the program. We then spoke about how the program needed more funding to provide breakfast in addition to lunch because many of the youth come hungry in the morning. This was a critical conversation because it provided insight about the connection between violating policy and maintaining the space as a refuge for children, youth, and their families.

Comforting a child that is hungry and is not having one of their basic needs met by physically hugging them and patting them on their back may seem out of the ordinary in a youth development program, but not at the SDCC. Fully embracing and holding the

children and youth that attend the program is one of many ways the SDCC works against policy to help the community survive through a struggle like not being able to feed a child. SDCC staff recognize what a number of the community members and families are going through and based on that information they do what they can to combat these problems but also comfort youth and their families through these struggles. While the SAAC program did not have the means to provide a full breakfast to this child they were able to provide crackers. This practice of providing a little snack is standard for a number of youth programs. However, the practice of holding, embracing, and comforting a child through that hunger and the emotions around the reasons why they are unable to eat are significant here and are considered physical performances of radical care.

To Lanita, the African Dance Teacher, hugging a child was one way that she combats struggles related to lack of interaction that she see's many Black families experience.

And that—what you just said about side hugs. I used to work with a particular organization that said never, you know “Don’t let the children hug you, make sure there’s somebody in the room there yada, yada, yada, yada.” Okay, I understand that, I realize that, I know what they mean about inappropriateness or if a child accuses you, but these kids might not get a hug. They might not get a hug for a week. And if a kid wants to come up and hug my legs, you’re going to let—I’m going to let that kid hug me. You know, now I’m not letting the kids be inappropriate or anything like that, but it also, there’s always people around. I make sure that I’m not isolated with any child unless it’s a personal situation that I have to handle with that child. But normally with any group, there’s a group of people around, there’s always people observing. But to treat them distant, as black people we have a history of being distant with our children, and we grew up in that environment and a lot of them still live in this environment where it’s just, if a child wants to show love, I let them because they might not get it [at home].

- Lanita

As I continued to observe what I refer to as physically performing radical care, I connected what Lanita expressed about allowing a child to show love to the eye roll that I witnessed the morning I overheard the staff from Big Creative Bubble mention side hugs. That eye roll signified the idea that radical care is sometimes physical in spaces of refuge and policies that discourage this form of care are barriers to the way in which these spaces promote communal survival. In order for staff members to enact radical care and work against policy they must hold collective relationships with the children, youth, and their families in order to understand their needs. This was also significant because it applied to the ways in which one staff member worked against policy in order to assist a young person survive homelessness.

Raising Them as Your Own: “I Knew She Was in Trouble”

[Ms. Vicki] and Mr. Harold. He has done the same thing. They’ve taken children that have gone through our program that did not have a very good home life and taken them under their wings and raised them in their home, so they can have an opportunity, so they can be better people. Raised them as their own children, clothed them, fed them, take them to church, dropped them off at college, go to their PTA and parent meetings and helped them do their [college] applications. How many people do that?

- Ms. Isaac, Early Literacy Teacher

Having a place to go home to every night is important for the development of a young person. Anthropologist Carol Stack (1975) provided an insight into the world of a low-income Black community in the book *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. She specifically shed light on the ways in which these communities live and survive poverty using their established community networks and kinships. Another anthropologist, Aimee Meredith Cox (2015), affords even more insight into the issues of poverty for low-income Black communities by examining the homelessness of

Black girls in her book *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship*.

Both of these authors push us to think about the ways in which low-income communities handle homelessness, especially examining the experiences of the children and youth.

In both books, children and youth are moved around to different homes in the community and even end up permanently living in a different house than their parents or entering into a homeless shelter. I connect these ethnographic works to a story Ms. Vicki shared with me during her interview. Ms. Vicki told me that there are times when she invests a great deal of time and care into some of the youth in the program and her relationship with Cee-Cee was an example of that. Ms. Vicki explained how Cee-Cee was living with her grandmother from the time she came to the program while in preschool up until she got to high school.

Barbara [her grandmother] threw Cee-Cee out and she went to live with the mother in this halfway house, not halfway house, but it was like some friend of hers who was also just out of prison. Some white girl that had a house in Cedar Hill and she went to live with her with her boyfriend who was also just out of prison. So all of them wore ankle bracelets... Couldn't go nowhere. And Cee-Cee's living in Cedar Hill and her school is at Booker T and there's no mass transit of anything and so she panics because all she can do is see herself flunking out of school, because she can't get to school.

So I get a call at like midnight one night and she's like "Miss Vicki, I'm going to be able to work in the summer program this year, right?" I said "yeah," and when she works in the summer program she stays at my house because her people were living in Wilmer-Hutchins at this point, and moved out of South Dallas. So I said "yeah, yeah you're good, you're good. I'm ready for that." She said "okay." She hung up, five minutes later she calls back and says "Miss Vicki, do you think we could like move that up a little bit?" So I knew she was in trouble. So I said, "where are you?" She said, "I'm not sure, I'm in Cedar Hill somewhere, I'm not sure exactly." I said, "what are you doing in Cedar Hill?" And so she told me the story. So I said, "Cee-Cee, pack your shit up, I'm coming to get you right now." So I went and got her, she moved into my house and finished out high school living with me.

- Ms. Vicki

Miss Vicki helped Cee-Cee complete her college and scholarship applications and upon graduating from Booker T. Washington High School, she went on to attend a University in Texas.

After hearing Cee-Cee's story I automatically thought about policies related to the report of child neglect to the State of Texas Department of Family and Child Protective Services (DFCPS)⁷. As oppose to calling and reporting the information that she knew about Cee-Cee to CPS, Ms. Vicki provided housing to a young person that needed a place to stay. While I am not sure how old Cee-Cee was at the time of this incident, I acknowledge that if she was under the age of eighteen this could be considered a possible severe violation to policies mandated by the State of Texas. Placing a critical lens on why Ms. Vicki may have not called DFCPS is important in this analysis.

This story sheds light on the connection the policy of calling DFCPS, about a matter related to a homeless young person, has to the foster care system. A system that, I contend, oppresses children and youth in some ways. Youth under the age of eighteen that become homeless and visit a homeless shelter without a parent or legal guardian are placed in the foster care system unless a family member comes forward and agrees to house and care for them. While foster care is set up to ensure the safety and protection of children and youth, a number of issues exist specifically related to the connection that foster care youth have to the juvenile justice system. Moving youth around to a number

⁷ As an organization that serves children and youth, the SAAC program is required by the State of Texas Department of Family and Child Protective Services to report any suspicions or confirmations of abuse.

of different foster homes during their time in the system affects their well-being and for Cee-Cee, it may have affected the ability for her to attend school at Booker T.

Washington High School, one of the best arts magnet schools in the Dallas area.

Reflecting on the quote at the beginning of this section, Ms. Vicki, as a community member and manager of the SDCC, Cee-Cee's space of refuge, took Cee-Cee under her wing to provide her with an opportunity that did not involve entering into a system that could not provide her with community support.

As I analyzed the data related to policy violations for this case study, Cee-Cee's story stood out the most to me. Not because it was a possible severe violation of policy, but due to the fact that it was another example of a survival tactic to ensure the well-being of a community member. In addition to this, Cee-Cee's story exemplifies how the SDCC as a space of refuge extends outside of the space and into the program manager's home. While the SDCC has a physical address, children, youth, families, and community members seek refuge through extensions of the SDCC like their personal car or the home of staff members. These narratives of how staff members worked against policies shed light on how radical care encompasses enacting survival tactics to ensure the physical and mental well-being and success of the community of South Dallas.

The Role of Anti-Policy: "We Do Whatever We Have to Do"

As youth development researchers, we must do the work to critique all aspects of youth development including the policies created to ensure that programs and their staff provide safe and inviting spaces for youth while not facing the consequence legal trouble. Delving into deconstructing why programs violate policies provide the field of

youth development, the organizations and institutions that create these policies, and the community they effect a better understanding on how to go about enacting change around these policies so they fit the needs of communities. The central focus for why staff members enacted these survival tactics and worked against policy was community.

The SDCC is an entity within the South Dallas community and Ms. Vicki recognizes that in order to maintain it as a space of refuge within South Dallas, staff members sometimes have to do things they are not supposed to do.

Anyway and so the community in my view is the entire, everybody here is a part of our community. We also obviously are very involved in the greater South Dallas community, because we don't see ourselves as being this little art oasis and you know, whatever, whatever. You know, we are, that's why we started doing things like Alpha started getting involved with helping kids get scholarships, we help them do their FASFA you know, anything we feel has to be done to help our children succeed, we're willing to do it. You know, from us picking up kids if they need to be picked up. You know, we ain't supposed to, we were told by the city "don't do it" but we do whatever we have to do.

- Ms. Vicki

The actions of driving youth to the SDCC each day in their personal cars, fully embracing youth instead of giving them side hugs, and even providing them with housing in their own personal homes are all associated with maintaining the SDCC as a space of refuge for the South Dallas community. Ms. Vicki refers to these actions as doing “whatever we have to do” and I conceptualize these actions as tactics that the SDCC staff members use to ensure they do everything that they can to protect and provide opportunities to the community of South Dallas. These survival tactics are how the SDCC enacts radical care.

Summary/Conclusion

Enacting radical care at the SDCC was exemplified through this case study through 1) The existence of familial relationships that involve meeting expectations and providing opportunities, 2) Resisting institutions that may indirectly exhibit harm to the community, and 3) enacting survival tactics to work against policies. Recognizing that the South Dallas community consistently experiences institutional oppression, the SDCC staff enacts radical care for the well-being of the community. Ginwright writes that, “Effectively responding to oppression, therefore, requires a process that restores individuals and communities to a state of well-being” (2010a, p. 9). The radical healing process is focused on youth engaging in action to have “freedom from oppression” (Ginwright, 2010a). Through this analysis of radical care within the SAAC program, it seems that community-based organizations are an integral part of the healing process because they enact radical care by instituting familial relationships and forms of protection against institutions that could harm the well-being of a young person and the community. Referring back to the application of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs in the introduction of this chapter, radical care ensures that the youth have their physiological and safety needs met. The next two chapters will provide an in-depth look into how the SAAC program meets the youth participant’s esteem and self-actualization needs through their work to develop their critical consciousness and positive cultural identity.

CHAPTER IV

BUILDING CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Introduction

This chapter will examine the ways critical consciousness is conceptualized within the Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD) framework and illustrate how the SAAC seeks to inculcate critical consciousness in youth. The first section will provide an in-depth look into the SAAC program processes related to the radical healing component of critical consciousness. The following section will examine the story of one former youth participant, Brandon, who exhibited critical consciousness through his display of an understanding of community, an understanding of social justice, a knowledge of history, and a knowledge of self.

Cultivating a young person's *critical consciousness* prepares them to resist various forms of oppression. "This form of consciousness places a focus on building an awareness of the intersections of personal and political life by pushing youth to understand how personal struggles have profound political explanations" (Ginwright, 2010a, p. 10). As one of the four components of the radical healing process, ***critical consciousness*** involves connecting the personal and political to achieve community, social, and individual wellness (Ginwright, 2010a). Applying Freire's (1970/2009) method of praxis (the synthesis of critical consciousness and social action), this case study found that the SAAC program intentionally focuses on the development of critical

thinking skills in order to cultivate the critical consciousness of children and youth that attend the program.

Critical Thinking as an Element of Critical Consciousness

For this case study, the development of critical consciousness is defined as a social transformation that involves building an ability to create social change in the world around them you. The end result of this social transformation is intellectual growth (Cammarota, 2011). The goal of the SJYD framework is to develop critical consciousness in youth of color by instilling self, social, and global levels of awareness (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). When I use and apply the term critical consciousness to this case study, I am adopting the definition Freire (1970/2009) provides in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* where it is described as “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements” (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 35). Specifically, critical consciousness is made up of two elements, 1) becoming aware of one’s social reality and 2) the process of changing that reality.

Examining how Freire (1970/2009) defines this concept provides insight into the critical consciousness component of the radical healing process. The social level of awareness in the SJYD framework requires an understanding that social awareness is not just service learning where youth complete community service projects. Social awareness “places an emphasis on community problem solving through critical thinking that raises questions about the roots of social inequality” (Ginwright & Cammrota, 2002, p. 90). This aspect of critical thinking emerged as a theme when examining the development of critical consciousness among youth in the SAAC program. The

following section will examine the ways in which the SAAC program cultivates what Harold refers to as a ‘*culture of critical thinking*’ to build critical consciousness.

Creating a Culture of Critical Thinking One Instance at a Time

And even Me [youth participant] in a way because he’s so self-aware. He questions everything. “Mr. Harold, why can’t we do this?” You know. But it is a culture of critical thinking.

- Harold, Assistant Program Manager

Opportunities for reflection were used to develop and engage youth’s critical thinking skills in the SAAC program. Youth in the program were encouraged to develop and use their critical thinking skills to reflect on the world around them. However, the development of critical thinking skills was influenced by the pedagogical methods SAAC teachers employed. One of these pedagogical methods included utilizing short instances of misunderstandings as a tool to develop critical thinking skills and assist youth in building critical consciousness.

Cultural Appropriation

One day during program activities I was conducting observations in the early literacy class with the first and second grade group when I saw Harold walk into the library, the location the early literacy class was held. Harold walked into the office located inside the library to use the computer but before he went into the office he looked at me and said, “*Ms. Aishia, I asked the babies to name a hip-hop artist and one of them said Taylor Swift. Now we are going to change our lesson so we can learn about*

*cultural appropriation*⁸. *I'm about to go in this office and print some stuff off for them to read.*" I looked at Harold and said, *"What? Wow, I'll be in there to observe in just a couple of minutes."*

After completing site observations in the early literacy class that day I went into Harold's classroom. He was serving as a substitute teacher for the vocal class because the teacher was out sick. Harold opened the class thinking that he would work with the youth by discussing hip-hop culture but when he opened the discussion with the question "name a hip-hop artist?" and received the response "Taylor Swift," everything he planned for the day shifted into a discussion about cultural appropriation. It was through this discussion that youth displayed the use of their critical thinking skills.

The response to Harold's question, Taylor Swift, is significant because of her relationship to Black popular culture. Swift is a twenty-six-year-old White American pop artist with a large fan base here in the United States. Within the last couple of years, Swift has been accused on numerous occasions of engaging in the cultural appropriation of Black culture. Swift engages in cultural appropriation by incorporating Black cultural expressions like her costume selection in the popular *Shake it Off* (2014) music video.

In this video you will find Swift imitating hip-hop culture, a Black popular cultural art form, by wearing popular dress or costume associated with hip-hop, like giant gold chains and earrings. In addition to that, the music video features backup dancers dressed in the same costume and engaging in the Black cultural art form of what

⁸ Cultural appropriation is defined as "the taking—from a culture that is not one's own— of intellectual property, cultural expressions or artifacts, history and ways of knowledge" (Ziff and Roa, 1997, p. 1).

is currently referred to as ‘twerking.’ One scene from the music video literally imitated the dress of the backup dancers in a popular hip-hop music video, *Hypnotize* (1997). The taking of these cultural expressions that specifically come from hip-hop culture is what causes many individuals, including Harold and the youth at the SAAC program to label Swift as a cultural appropriator.

Shifting the focus from a general discussion on hip-hop culture to cultural appropriation shed light on the importance of flexibility when creating and sustaining what Harold refers to as a culture of critical thinking. For the rest of the two-hour class, Harold and the youth participants engaged in discussion about cultural appropriation as it relates to hip-hop culture. Harold decided to begin the discussion on cultural appropriation by placing a giant sticky note on the wall and writing, “*what are elements of culture?*” at the top. The youth then had the opportunity to walk up to the giant the sticky note and write what they believed to be elements of culture. They listed the following elements: *culture is a tradition, culture is connected to family, culture is connected to the Juneteenth, dance, music, art, lyrics, food, fashion, hair, spiritual ceremonies, language, speech, and social behavior.*

After this exercise, youth had to take turns reading paragraphs from the information on Wikipedia about cultural appropriation. This reading defined cultural appropriation and provided examples of this phenomenon. As they were reading Harold asked them to think about what they understood about culture and he wrote the Wolof word ‘*Déggnaa*,’ meaning “I understand,” at the top of another giant sticky note on the wall. This word was used because the youth and their teachers were learning words from

the Wolof language spoken in Senegal to connect with the theme of the 2015 SAAC program.

Next, one of the youth in the room was asked to write the words “*four elements of hip-hop*” on another blank giant sticky note on the wall. Harold asked if they knew any of the four elements of hip-hop. One of the young people in the room said, “rapping.” Harold responded, “Good, *but it is referred to as emceeing. Now go write it up there.*” The young person grabbed a marker and asked Harold how to spell it. Harold spelled it out for him and they moved on to the next element. Harold had another young person go up and write the next element, “*deejaying.*” He then had another young person do the same thing and write the word “*breaking*” and another young person wrote the word “*graffiti.*”

After they listed the four elements of hip-hop Harold asked if they knew why spelling the four elements in that way was important. They were not sure and Harold shared that when you create a culture you also create words and how to spell those words. One of the young people in the room raised her hand and said, “*I didn’t know I have the power to create words.*” This reflection on the creation of words was significant to this young person’s sense of empowerment. Creating a culture of critical thinking facilitated this sense of empowerment.

After defining the four elements of hip-hop, Harold went back to the sticky note with the Wolof word ‘*Déggnaa*’ at the top and asked for volunteers to come up and write what they understand. The youth wrote *culture, oppression, speech and social behavior, and cultural appropriation*. The last question Harold did was ask the youth in the room,

“alright, now name some cultural appropriators?” The youth responded with names like Justin Timberlake, Taylor Swift, and Macklemore⁹. Harold then dismissed everyone in the room for lunch. I viewed what I observed that day as an example of the process behind providing young people with the space and opportunities to develop critical thinking skills.

What happened on that day when the young person answered Taylor Swift, shed light on the method or the process SAAC teachers employed to foster critical thinking skills in youth participants. Harold reflected on this day during his interview.

Yeah, but I think again, I mean, it's one of the things I'm doing this self-evaluation of the program in terms of going back to basic concepts. I think that exercise that we did around cultural appropriation, while I think there's some good things, some takeaways, again for me it's going back to basics, right. What is culture or what I own as culture? What is culture? So really breaking it down. And instead of saying, no, that's wrong, let's identify why is that wrong. It was an incorrect statement, but why is it incorrect, and my understanding of it.

- Harold

Harold realized that before he could discuss cultural appropriation he had to first provide a space for youth to define culture and discuss elements of culture. From there, he had to find a way to help youth understand that they can hold ownership over their culture. Harold was then able to have a discussion around cultural appropriation with the youth participants. It was through this understanding that I label this as one example of the process of developing critical thinking skills because each young person had to assess and analyze definitions of culture and based on that information they had to reconstruct

⁹ Justin Timberlake is a 35-year-old White American musical artist and actor known for creating popular Rhythm and Blues (R&B) music. Macklemore is a 32-year-old American musical artist known for his popular hip-hop songs. R&B and hip-hop are both historical Black musical art forms (Neal, 2013).

their understanding of culture to include a sense of ownership. It was the sense of ownership that helped the young people better understand the concept of cultural appropriation. The action taken by Harold demonstrates one of many ways the culture of critical thinking is maintained in the SAAC program.

Understanding Solidarity: A Field Trip to Senegal

This section will discuss how the culture of critical thinking takes on misunderstandings that are addressed in the classroom and extend it outside of the space of the SDCC to places like the Islamic center of Irving. Maintaining a culture of critical thinking involves providing youth participants with opportunities to reflect on new information and formulate conclusions based on that information. This happened one day while I was conducting participant-observations in the Rites of Passage class. On this day each young person in the room was asked to sit on the ground in a circle. In the center of the circle was a giant punch bowl filled with little index cards that had facts about Senegal written on them. Next, they each had an opportunity to draw an index card out of the bowl and read it out loud to everyone in the room. Oumar, a youth participant, selected an index card and read, “94% of the people living in Senegal are not Christian.” The teacher, Mama Jendayi, repeated what Oumar said out loud, “94% of the people living in Senegal are not Christian. What does that mean? Does that mean that they don’t believe in God?” A couple of youth in the room answered, “yes.” Mama Jendayi responded, “no, that’s not what that means.” All of the young people fell silent and it seemed they were pondering her response. She then took the time to explain that there are many different religions in Senegal. They discussed Islam as a religion and how the

word Allah means God in the Arabic language. In addition to this, Mama Jendayi told the youth that majority of the population in Senegal identify as Muslim.

Throughout the rest of the day I heard youth participants talk about facts they learned about Senegal during their activity with Mama Jendayi. As opposed to Mama Jendayi having the youth simply read the facts aloud and repeat it, she had them stop and think by asking the question, “what does that mean” after each young person read a fact from one of the index cards. By asking this question, youth participants learned the process of analyzing and assessing, two components of critical thinking. A couple of days later Ms. Vicki told me about a field trip she planned for the group of young people in the Rites of Passage class and invited me to come along. They would be visiting the Islamic Center of Irving, TX to learn more about the most popular religion in Senegal, Islam. When I received this invitation I connected it to the activity Mama Jendayi facilitated during the Rites of Passage class earlier that week. By visiting the Islamic Center of Irving, the youth participants were going to be given an opportunity to reconstruct their knowledge about the Islamic religion and Muslim people.

On the following week I accompanied the teen group, Ms. Vicki, and Ms. Clark on the field trip to the Islamic Center. This field trip gave youth the opportunity to tour the Islamic Center and ask any questions they had about Islam as a religion. In addition to this, they observed mid-day prayer service during Ramadan. Before they observed mid-day prayer, some of the youth were given an opportunity to experience washing their feet and hands before mid-day prayer service. During this field trip they also met the Imam, a religious leader, at the Islamic Center of Irving and had the opportunity to

ask him any questions about the center or Islam. The youth learned about Ramadan and the sacrifices associated with participating in Ramadan.

Information on the practice of Islam in Senegal was provided by a local community member that was Muslim and from Senegal. This community member pointed to a white board in the room they were in and told the youth, *“If from the beginning of the white board to the end of the white board is history, then slavery would not have started until the very end of this silver piece right here at the end. Everything before that, we share together.”* I argue that this statement pushed each young person to think about the similarities they had with the people living in Senegal, specifically through the lens of history. It was this statement and the visit to the Islamic Center that may have assisted youth participants in better understanding the solidarity that exists between individuals throughout the African Diaspora, including the existence of Muslims and Christians. Before leaving the Islamic Center, youth were given pamphlets about the Islamic religion and a copy of the English translation of the Quran. Their field trip host explained the importance of the Quran to the youth participants as they left the Islamic Center and they were told to treat their Quran like they treat their Bible.

The visit to the Islamic Center gave youth opportunities to reconstruct the ways in which they understood Islam and connect it to the African Diaspora. By providing this experience, the SAAC program maintained the culture of critical thinking that Mama Jendayi fostered in the previous week during the Rites of Passage class. This process of creating and maintaining a culture of critical thinking in regards to varying religious practices was similar to the discussion on cultural appropriation. However, it extended

the culture of critical thinking to a new space where youth were able to explore and exercise their critical thinking skills at the Islamic Center of Irving.

Becoming a Part of the Culture of Critical Thinking

Throughout my time at the SAAC program I observed many more instances of the production and maintenance of this culture of critical thinking. As my time at the SAAC program progressed I soon became a part of that culture. This section will provide one example of how I became a part of the culture of critical thinking while conducting participant-observations. One day while participating in the poetry class with the teen group I was sitting at a table with Egypt, Butterfly, and Gaia working on a poem when I saw Life trip over Red's feet as she walked by his chair. Red looked up at her and said, "*watch where you goin' light skin girl.*" Life responded and said, "*Ooooooooooh, You So Black.*" Kijana, the poetry teacher, then stepped in and said, "*Alright now you all stop. Now why is being Black a bad thing?*" Oumar responded, "*It's not.*" Kijana agreed and said, "*You know what, we're going to write a poem about it. We're gonna call it Ooooooooooh, You So Black!*" Kijana then got a giant sticky note and wrote '*Ooooooooooh, You So Black*' at the top. She said that we would be writing the poem together as a group and everyone needed to think of at least one line. Kijana wrote the two lines of the poem:

Ooooooooooh, You So Black,

***Wit'cho' black, chocolate brown, paper bag, high yellow, caramel, red bone
beautiful skin.***

She then told us that it sounds like the statement will be negative but it's really positive.

We then each shared a line we wanted to add to the poem and by the end of the class

time we had created the poem below:

Ooooooooooh, You So Black! Poem

By: The South Dallas Poets

Ooooooooooh, You So Black!
Wit' cho' black, chocolate brown, paper bag, high yellow, caramel, red bone
beautiful skin
Ooooooooooh, You So Black!
You challenge me to be blacker
Ooooooooooh, You So Black!
Wit' cho' skin kissed by the sun that shines bright as a diamond
Ooooooooooh, You So Black!
Wit' cho' full beautiful lips, curly hair, and wide nose
Ooooooooooh, You So Black!
That you influence the saying, "Black don't crack!"; Forever 21
Ooooooooooh, You So Black!
I don't know where you skin color ends and other races begin
Ooooooooooh, You So Black!
The world would collapse if you turned your back
Ooooooooooh, You So Black!
Sassiness and intellect you will never lack
Ooooooooooh, You So Black!
You embrace it to the max
Ooooooooooh, You So Black!
The way you whip, track by track
Ooooooooooh, You So Black!
The way your leg stank and the way yo' hands shake
So Know That Black Ain't Wack!

The creation of this poem provides another example of how the culture of critical thinking is maintained at the SAAC program. In addition to this, it provided me with an opportunity to enter into this culture of critical thinking through my participation in

writing this poem. I wrote the sixth line of this poem with the help of Me, a youth participant. I had to analyze and assess my thoughts on blackness in order to come up with the sixth line of this poem and as a result, I engaged in the culture of critical thinking in poetry class that day.

The construction of this poem provides an example of the ways in which SAAC teachers respond to any misunderstanding youth display in their classrooms. Just as quickly as Mama Jendayi and Harold responded to cultural appropriation and a misunderstanding of Islam, Kijana quickly used poetry to critically think about how the youth viewed blackness. This exercise pushed youth to do the mental work of turning what the rest of the world characterizes as negative characteristics of blackness into positive attributes. This was not a poem that Kijana planned for the youth to write that day but after the interaction between Life and Red, she immediately shifted the focus of the day into a discussion where everyone in the room had to critically think about blackness. In addition to this, Kijana pushed the critical thinking process further into the social action of creating art by writing the poem above.

Sharing Knowledge as a Form of Social Action That Promotes Critical Thinking

The SAAC program cultivates the culture of critical thinking by promoting the importance of shared knowledge, something considered to be a form of social action. This section will provide an example of how a former SAAC youth participant, who now teaches at the program, maintained a culture of critical thinking by engaging in the social action of sharing knowledge with her daughter and other children. This knowledge was shared utilizing method she learned while attending the program as a young person.

Kim, a former youth participant in the SAAC program and current program dance teacher, described how her first and second grade group assessed, analyzed, and reconstructed their ideas about modern day Senegal.

And before I showed the video I asked the children what they thought about—when they think about Senegal what do you see? And my younger group, group A, they, some of them said, “Well, I really, I really hope that they have clothes because I don’t think that they have clothes. I think that they just walk around naked.” I said, “Okay, okay. That’s one, that’s one thought, that they don’t have clothes.” And then another said that they don’t have food. I was like, “Okay, they don’t have food. Well, you think that they don’t have clothes and they don’t have food, so let’s watch this video and see what’s going on.” So, I showed them the village video first, then the dance video. Okay. They said, “Oh Miss Kim, look. That’s a regular T-shirt. They have blue jeans on.” I was like, “Yes baby. That’s it, that’s what I wanted to show you. They have clothes just like we have clothes. They buy their clothes just like we buy our clothes. Some make them, just like we might make our own.” They be like, “Oh.” And I said, “Look, they’re going down the market. Do you see all of this stuff over there?” “Those are bananas.” “Well, they’re not bananas, but their plantains, yes. They have food and they buy their food just like we do at their markets. Here we have grocery stores. They do have grocery stores, because they have cities and towns just like we do.” Yeah, so the kids understood, like, “Oh, okay. So it’s not just a jungle?” “No, it is not a jungle. They have a city just like we do. Dallas is a big city, Dakar is a big city.” So they’re starting to understand now.

- Kim

This example of critical thinking and action provides insight on the process involved in creating a culture of critical thinking. Kim allowed the young children to share their thoughts about Senegal and they were very honest. What is important here for the development of critical thinking skills is that the young children, in first and second grade, were allotted the opportunity to assess their thoughts with a video that provided images and sound of modern day Senegal. Based on this video the children reconstructed their thoughts and ideas about modern day Senegal.

By showing the first and second graders a video of modern day Senegal, Kim shared knowledge with them. I argue that sharing knowledge is a form of social action, a component of critical consciousness because it assists in creating a collective of individuals that can work together to create social change at the community level. I discovered that Kim also shared the knowledge she gained by participating in the program as a young person with her own children. During her interview she shared with me a story about how she provided her daughter with an example of critical thinking to understand the truth about Christopher Columbus.

Because you know, at that age a lot is thrown at them in school and... one thing, it wasn't here, but there's one thing that, of course it was Columbus and my baby said, "Mommy, Christopher Columbus found America." "Baby, baby, let me sit you down real quick. Let me talk to you. America wasn't found by Christopher Columbus. He did not discover America, love. There were already inhabitants here and they called them Indians." "Why'd they call them Indians, Mommy?" "Because Christopher Columbus was on his way to India and he just happened to, 'Oh, there's a land. Let's go over there.' So, baby, he didn't find it. He didn't discover it. He just tripped over it. That's what he did. He just tripped over it." "And they made a lot of the Indians, the Native Americans sick. They made a lot of the tribes sick and a lot of the tribes died." She said, "They did, Mommy?" I said, "Yes, come here let me show you this book." And I had books, I had—I showed her the different tribes, because I also connected with the Kiawah Indians. That's the tribe that I know that I'm from on my mom's side. I don't know about my dad, but I know for sure that there are Kiawah Indians on my mom's side. So I showed her, you know, the different tribes and everything and where they're located and where there's a very dense number of them and where there's a big population. She said, "Mommy, why are there so many here?" I said, "Well love, that's another subject, but they were forced to go there."

- Kim

Kim attributed this process of developing critical thinking skills in her daughter as something she learned while attending the SAAC program as a young person. In this case, she provided her daughter with a book filled with images of maps that urged her to think about her connection with the oppressed group in the situation, Native Americans.

This is an example of building critical consciousness in a young person because it connects personal experiences, her connection to the Native Americans, to politics about Christopher Columbus. This case study showed that critical consciousness can be developed at a very young age as long as a young person is developing within a culture of critical thinking. The following section of this chapter will discuss how former SAAC youth participant, Brandon, embodied the results of long-term involvement in a culture critical thinking.

Brandon's Story

Black people are the most beautiful people on the planet. It definitely raised my confidence and just leaving the place will show you that you should just love your skin. Point blank.

- Brandon, Former Youth Participant and Teaching Assistant

In this section I will use Brandon's story to deconstruct the ways in which his attendance in the SAAC program engendered a personal transformation that developed his critical consciousness. Brandon's personal transformation described below will shed light on how Black youth develop what Robinson and Ward (1992) refer to as transformative resistance. This form of resistance takes place when Black youth are "encouraged to acknowledge the problems of, and demand change in, an environment that oppresses them" (Robinson & Ward, 1992, p. 88). Ginwright (2010a) argues that transformative resistance is both personal and political when he writes,

This form of resistance encourages Black youth to reject toxic images and beliefs about blackness and redefine Black identity in a way that is self-critical and culturally affirming. Transformative resistance is an important aspect of Black

youth political behavior because it is often shaped by deeply personal challenges... (p. 123).

This form of resistance occurs through the development of a young person's critical consciousness and is considered a healthy psychosocial response to oppression (Ginwright, 2010a). Brandon's personal transformation described below will shed light on the processes involved in achieving the self, social, and global levels of awareness described in the SJYD framework by connecting it to the SAAC program outcomes (a knowledge of history, a knowledge of self, understanding of community, and an understanding of social justice).

Meeting Brandon

By the time the second week of the program came around I was gearing up to begin interviewing adult staff members, teaching assistants, and conducting a focus group with youth at the end of the week. One morning I noticed a new face at the SDCC. As I walked in the kitchen to put my lunch in the refrigerator, I saw all of the Teaching Assistants (TA's) and a young man sitting at one of the tables eating breakfast. I said hello to everyone and asked if anyone wanted to do their interview with me today. Purple, one of the TA's volunteered and said she could do it after she finished eating. I assured her that would be okay and let her know that I would be sitting at one of the tables in the hallway. I looked at the young man that I had never met before and said, "Hello, I'm Aishia." Before he could respond, Purple smiled and said, "that's my brother Brandon." I told Purple that I did not know she had a brother and Brandon said, "nice to meet you." He wanted to know if I was a new teacher at the SAAC program and I told him that I was there conducting a case study on the SAAC program. I told Brandon that I

was interviewing the TA's to get an insight on their experiences being in the program. Brandon then told me that he had been in the program for a long time. I responded, "that's great, then I would love to do an interview with you." He let me know that he would be in and out of the SDCC for the rest of the week so we could schedule a time.

Later on that day while conducting an interview with the hip-hop music production teacher, Malik, I found out more about Brandon. He was one of Malik's former students and TA's. Brandon was at the SDCC visiting everyone before he had to return back to Florida where he would continue his studies as a music production student at Full Sail University. I quickly noticed that many of the TA's looked up to Brandon and they were all really close friends with him. In addition to this, Brandon had established a mentor relationship with Malik and he served as someone in Brandon's life that supported his artistic ability in music production. Malik revealed how he provided some advice and direction to Brandon as he was thinking through his post high school graduation plans.

And out of that, two, three years of the program and me being involved, I'm not going to say I helped him make a decision, but he would ask me opinions about what he should do in college and where he wants to go and the direction he's trying to do; with his musical career and other like aspects of life. And I can't say – like I said, I had a big influence but some of the steps that I kind of recommended, he took it upon himself and he's making those steps right now.

- Malik

In addition to the hip-hop music production teacher, Malik, a number of influences at the SDCC and in the South Dallas community are assisting Brandon through a healthy development into adulthood. Brandon attributed growing up at the SDCC and in South Dallas to his success as a young adult.

Growing Up at the SDCC

During each interview with the TA's I made sure to ask them one critical question: "How old were you when you first started coming to the SAAC program?" The answer to this question was significant to this case study as it illustrated the importance of program duration. This case study found that the longer a young person is enrolled in the SAAC program, the more reflection and social action (praxis) they engaged in. Brandon went from living in a homeless shelter with his mom to moving to South Dallas where he entered into the space of the SAAC program. The program was not anything he had experienced before but he viewed that as a good thing.

Well I'm originally, I was originally born in Houston and then after Houston, we ended up moving into a homeless shelter and my mom ended up getting married and then we moved to South Dallas and then my dad, actually my stepdad actually got us here. Yea, yea. Cause he was from South Dallas. Yea, he got us in here. I was 5. It was different but I would say that's a good thing because each year, you learn something different. It was like a 7 year rotation and one year we would learn about like the Haitian revolution and the next year the civil rights movement in Dallas and the next year slavery burial rituals and their American translations. Like everything was different but I will say the morning rituals ain't changed, you still got the, I mean you learn the umm. What's that? Yea, yea the Negro National Anthem. Yea, you learn that, you ain't gon never forget that.

- Brandon

The seven-year cycle or rotation of the SAAC program can be described as what positive youth development researchers and evaluators refer to as intentional or deliberate programming (Baldwin, Caldwell, & Witt, 2005). This type of programming focuses on producing a set of outcomes. The SAAC program outcomes were described as young people gaining 1) a knowledge of history, 2) a knowledge of self, 3) an understanding of community, and 4) an understanding of social justice.

As described in Chapter II, the seven-year cycle provides youth with knowledge of African Diaspora history over the course of seven years with each year focusing on a specific aspect of that history. Above, Brandon mentions that he specifically remembers learning about the Haitian Revolution, Civil Rights Movement in Dallas, and Slavery Burial Rituals and their American Translations. These specific topics and many other experiences assisted Brandon in developing his knowledge of African Diaspora history and knowledge of self through an understanding of his connection to that history. In addition to what Brandon describes above, the program also gave him an understanding of community and social justice.

Understanding Community: “A Place to Get It Wrong”

The SDCC serves as a community cultural center for South Dallas. Living up to its name, the SDCC works to instill a sense of community in South Dallas children and youth through the SAAC program. The program manager, Ms. Vicki, deliberately focuses on instilling community in children and youth to ensure that as the youth in the program transition into adulthood, the community of South Dallas is sustained. The SAAC program achieves this by showing youth what community looks and feels like on a smaller scale. This smaller scale community is the SAAC program itself and one way that Brandon began to understand community was through the ways in which the program managers would respond when he failed to meet their expectations.

When Brandon failed at meeting the program staff’s expectations, he learned about the importance of understanding community as a support system.

Yea. Everybody, like Mama V is like a mama to every kid that's in this program. Like they might, they might not say it now cause when I was little, I was bad. I

used to get kicked out of the camp for like a week, like I was bad, I was horrible. But every summer she would let me come back. She would, she would be mad at me for being bad but every summer she would let me come back and I thank her for it but like, she just always have open arms, you know. She's open minded, realistic, she tell you what it is.

- Brandon

Chapter III outlines how meeting expectations and implementing certain forms of discipline were ways that the SDCC staff enacted radical care for the youth and the community. Brandon's description of being kicked out as a result of not meeting Ms. Vicki's expectations and the importance of her always inviting him back into the space not only displayed radical care, it also helped Brandon construct an understanding of community. Each time Brandon failed to meet Ms. Vicki's expectations, she would express her displeasure but still provide him with support and guidance in the same way that a community would.

The relationship that Brandon had with Ms. Vicki exhibited what Rhodes (2004) refers to as a caring youth-adult relationship. These type of relationships feature the following outcomes: 1) enhance social skills and emotional well-being, 2) improve cognitive skills through instructions and conversation, and 3) provide role models and advocates (Rhodes, 2004, p. 149). The processes that facilitate these outcomes are related to the actions of Ms. Vicki having Brandon leave the program but always inviting him back. This process forced Brandon to develop cognitive skills (i.e., critical consciousness) that centered the importance of his responsibility to the community at the program. This sense of community enhanced his emotional well-being because it afforded support to Brandon that he knew would never diminish. While Brandon recalls

misbehaving numerous times, he recognized that caring adults, like Ms. Vicki, would always advocate for him.

Harold connects this process to the significance of Brandon having a safe place to explore failure.

And Brandon was a TA last year. He went to college for music production. And as you can see the other TAs' look up to him and he inspired Mr. Devante' to be a vegetarian. But it's that kind of stuff where again, I think it doesn't happen a lot in life that we have the opportunity to finish and people that will bail us out. But not just bail us out but believe in us. It's the same way, white folks get it all the time. They can stay with the drugs. But again there is an avenue that's geared towards their success that maybe they can try. So our discipline is no, you fuck up once, we never want to see you again. But it's like they have to have those, a place to get it wrong.

- Harold

Having the SAAC program as a place to do what Harold refers to as “get it wrong,” instilled the importance of community as a support system to Brandon. Brandon recognized the ways in which the SAAC program teachers display community by taking the time to learn every single young person's name and treat them like their own children.

Yea, yea and we all, and everybody support everybody. Like here, you'll find one of the best support systems in South Dallas. You know, like I know they got other camps downtown but I think you gotta pay for them. But like I said, with the kids I grew up with when I see em', like they, they, it's like you might have like a hundred kids in a class or twenty kids or however many kids you have in a class but the teachers know every single name. Like if you was to walk down the street and you saw one of your teachers from like ten years ago they would be like, hey Brandon. They still know your name. It's like every, everybody knows everybody. Yea, true. But the teachers here are just like another parent. Like I can honestly say that I have like ten women in my life that I consider mama and like three of them are from here.

- Brandon

Brandon considering some of the SAAC program teachers as mother figures signifies 1) caring youth-adult relationships and 2) an understanding of how community cares for one another. After spending thirteen years in the program, Brandon understands community as mutual support and this is displayed in the quote above.

It is through the development of critical consciousness that youth begin to understand the role they play in their community to advocate for social change. I argue that this connects to the social level of awareness in the SJYD framework. This level of awareness proposes that a young person has achieved this level of awareness when they experience the “feeling of being a part of something meaningful and productive” (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, p. 94). As Brandon progressed through the program and explored failure within the space of the SDCC, he developed an understanding of his role in supporting the SAAC community and eventually went on to take on a leadership role in the program as a teaching assistant. It was through the opportunities to explore failure and develop knowledge of history and self that Brandon fell in love with his Black identity and progressed through the self level of awareness in the SJYD framework.

Knowledge of History and Self: Falling in Love with His Blackness

If Brandon never received the invitation to come back to the SAAC program each year, he would not have understood the history of music as it relates to his future career goals in hip-hop music production. The SAAC program gave Brandon the space to progress from playing the African drums to sampling those very drums to produce hip-hop music.

I mean cause I'm, well one, cause I was younger and you know the teachers have changed a lot. You know and I would say that it just moved with the times because, the, as time moves, as technology progress you know the different subjects are being taught at the center. Like when I first came here we didn't have music production and like making beats and all that. We had African drums, drumsticks, and buckets you know. Everything progresses so yea. I mean, making beats. I'm a producer. I make records but making beats is pretty dope, I love it but at the same time, actually playing the drums and actually like feeling it and all of that, it becomes more of a personal, intimate thing where it's between you and the drum.

- Brandon

Through the activities of drumming and hip-hop “beat making” or music production Brandon gained knowledge of the history of music in the African Diaspora and developed an intimate relationship with drumming. This intimate relationship with drumming expanded his knowledge of self because it developed his identity as a music producer.

Knowledge of Black cultural history opened Brandon's eyes to a number of things and he began to see the world in a way that he had not seen it before.

Before I got here, honestly, I really didn't have to deal with that [understanding race] when I was little because you know like I said, I was in a homeless shelter and it wasn't. Everybody was struggling there, you know what I'm saying, but I would say after I had, you know, learned about my culture and stuff like that, that's when the problems really started coming in. Like, you know, I would learn stuff here and then I would, I can honestly say that it opened my eyes being here. I started noticing stuff that I wouldn't notice before, you know, notice these little things that we, to the blind eye, that we wouldn't, you know, think about but you know going here every summer and learning and learning so much like, it'll open your mind you'll see some stuff.

- Brandon

After Brandon made this statement during his interview, I followed up his statement by asking, “What kind of stuff did you see?” Brandon then told me a story about an interaction he had with Ms. Vicki during the summer program and how it expanded his

knowledge about the importance of doing your own research and drawing conclusions for yourself an action Freire (2009) would consider an act of critical consciousness.

For one, like, you know in the school text books, the school history books they tell you about Abraham Lincoln and how he freed the slaves and you know, which is a good thing and all that, this that and the third and I remember one day I was saying Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves and all this and Mama V was like, do you think he cared about the slaves? And I said, yea. She was like “he ain’t care about the slaves. He [Abraham Lincoln] said to save the country he would free all slaves or free no slaves. He did it to save the country.” You know, so that, that’s one thing that I, you know, it messed my head up so honestly, ever since that day, high school or whenever in history classes I didn’t too much ... You know, yea. [Pay attention] To what the textbooks say. You know and like they say, history, HIS story. You know what I’m saying. You know, they need to make our own history class.

- Brandon

When Ms. Vicki corrected Brandon’s statement about Abraham Lincoln, she was maintaining the culture of critical thinking discussed in the previous section of this chapter. As a result of this conversation with Ms. Vicki, Brandon learned that he could not trust everything that was in his history book at school and would have to find true knowledge on his own and through his participation in the SAAC program.

SJYD proposes that youth should be given the space to develop an understanding of the role they play in seeking knowledge to create and advocate for social change (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). The dialogue that Brandon had with Ms. Vicki about Abraham Lincoln’s legacy, not only expanded his knowledge of history, it also pressed him to explore concepts he was not receiving at school in history class. Exploring these new concepts and applying critical thinking skills is required to achieve the social level of awareness in the SJYD framework. When this level of awareness is achieved, youth began to apply their newly developed knowledge and ability to critically think to solve

social problems in their communities (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Brandon takes on this role when he attempts to share the new knowledge and critical thoughts he developed through the SAAC program.

Yea, that, that yea, going here, you know, it helped with like knowing yourself. So when I would hear certain things, you know in school. Like, like I said in history class and I would ask like, naw, naw or I would say naw that ain't, that' ain't right you know. And to have other kids be like oh, you don't know what you talking about and I be like bruh, you have no idea, like you don't know nothing about your, you, if you don't know your history, you don't know yourself you know what I'm saying because you wouldn't be here without, without the history, you know so I try, I just try to, I let people believe what they believe you know, but for those willing to listen, you know, cause everybody, everybody don't like to listen. I know at one point and time I didn't like to listen but for those that'll listen, I'll tell them what I know. Now I don't know everything, you know what I'm saying but I know what I know and can't nobody tell me what I don't know, you know and here you will, you ain't got no choice, you will do your research, you know. At one point and time, they got the you know the computer lab? We all had our own computer and we were doing our research you know.

- Brandon

The space to do his own research and then move out into the community (e.g., his history class at school) to share this new knowledge with the hope of moving his community forward by developing their knowledge of history is one way Brandon assumed his role in creating community change. Although Brandon was able to reach the social level of awareness where he engaged in the action of sharing knowledge with his community, this knowledge also pushed him to do what Ginwright (2010a) calls redefining his Black identity in a way that is culturally affirming.

Brandon connects his attendance in the SAAC program every year with the expansion of his knowledge and this knowledge expansion increased his self-esteem and his love for Black people.

*My knowledge very much expanded but I also became, like it also boosted my confidence as a Black male. So I'm eighteen now and I like everything Black. If it ain't Black, ya know, not trying to say I'm racist or anything but you know **I love Black people**. Black people are the most beautiful people on the planet. It definitely raised my confidence and just leaving this place will show you that you should just love your skin. Point blank.*

- Brandon

Brandon illuminates how closely connected knowledge of history and self are to one another as a Black person. Once Brandon understood what his blackness represented he not only gained knowledge of self, he also fell in love with himself, which is something that he wants for his future child.

Like I said, I love myself. Like it done got to the point where I'm like, can't nobody tell me nothing about me, you know what I'm saying and I love the program. Like, not trying to be like cliché cause you know, when, if I ever have a kid, I will have my kid in this program because it helped me a lot.

- Brandon

Brandon admits that he did not have much knowledge of his culture and history before coming to the program but now as an eighteen year old, he not only understands how his racial identity influences his power¹⁰ in the world, he displays that power by actively working to share knowledge with others in the community to create social change and work towards social justice.

Understanding Social Justice: Developing Critical Consciousness

The SJYD framework connects engagement in social justice to the development of critical consciousness. Critical consciousness involves praxis, reflection, and social action (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). The development of Brandon's critical

¹⁰ The term power here is used to refer to "the capacity to make changes and choices and to be heard; and to define, control, defend, and promote one's interest" (Themba, 1999, p.21).

consciousness in the SAAC program granted him an understanding of social justice and Brandon describes how he learned what he refers to as the “real deal.”

Yea, the cultural center [SDCC] will tell you the real deal. That's no info, but if you want your kid to go somewhere and be lied to about themselves or, you know, about their history and all that. Don't send them here cause you gon learn the real deal. You gon learn the real deal as far as social economy and you gon, even when it comes to the arts, you gon learn the real deal. It's just the real deal. They gon keep it one hundred as people say. Yea. Yea, if you are misinformed they will shut it down and let you know right then and there. They not gon pull you to the side, no. They want to let you know.

- Brandon

Learning the “real deal” to Brandon has to do with the importance of correction when one is misinformed. As opposed to following what Freire (2009) refers to as the banking model of education, the SAAC program invest in young people by correcting any misinformation they may believe, but most importantly providing children and youth with the tools to produce their own knowledge after going through a research process. The banking model of education is used to describe the belief that “Education...[is] an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor...knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire, 2009, p. 72). Brandon’s description of the learning process at the SDCC relies on youth voice to guide the sharing of knowledge. Youth feel comfortable enough in the space to voice their thoughts and based on these thoughts, adult staff members collectively share their knowledge with youth. This process refutes the banking model of education because the knowledge is engendered from the youth, not the adult staff. The ways in which the SAAC program promotes the importance of shared knowledge builds critical

consciousness for youth because it embraces and values the voices of the young people in the program (Freire, 2009).

Brandon used that critical consciousness to think about changes he wanted to make in his community and he started with the recreational facilities he used as a child.

But I've always said that once I like get where I need to be, I'm gon, I want to rebuild the park that I used to play at and I want to reopen the recreation center and also I want to school, my middle school, I want to buy like new drums for the music department and stuff, but yea. Mainly over there, cause you know, Mildred L. Dunn and I mean, its JJ Rhodes and I think they, I heard they closed Pearl C. down.

- Brandon

Rebuilding a park and a recreation center involves organizing the community and advocating for community change. When Brandon mentioned this in his interview, I connect it to how one creates plans to achieve social justice and it begins with an understanding of social justice. Having access to recreational spaces is a social justice issue and by Brandon recognizing the importance of rebuilding these spaces that were torn down he has an understanding of the role social justice can play to make meaningful changes in communities.

The SJYD framework's global level of awareness requires acknowledging the connection one has to the struggle of others. Individuals who achieve this level of awareness advocate for a safe and healthy community and hold optimism about social change (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Brandon making plans to rebuild the recreational facility he used as a child and young adult shows that he's reached the global level of awareness in the SJYD framework. The process of taking action to

rebuild this recreation center in order to create a safe space for youth living in South Dallas is how Brandon displays his understanding of social justice.

Brandon also displayed an understanding of social justice when he discussed the community issue of the local independent school district combining the two South Dallas middle schools (discussed in Chapter II). Brandon applied his knowledge of history to conceptualize the actions of DISD as an injustice.

So like that's. Actually the way I see it, I feel like it's a form of camps. Like back in the day with the camps that used to put all these, one specific race in these camps and make them work. I feel like that's exactly what they're doing, you know and honestly by putting these two schools together that does nothing but start problems. These two schools are in two different parts of South Dallas, you know so that don't do nothing but cause trouble. You know like when they was talking about closing Lincoln or whatever. You put them schools together and it ain't go be nothing but trouble.

- Brandon

According to Giwright and Cammarota (2002), “Although young people are influenced by oppressive social forces, they still have the capacity to respond to forms of social control” (p.86). In the quote above, Brandon recognized that when the school district combined the two middle schools in South Dallas they were creating what he refers to as a camp. By using the term camp Brandon is referring to concentration and internment camps where people are sent to do work and are treated violently and inhumanely. By comparing Dade Middle School to an internment camp, Brandon identifies the social injustice that the school district places on the young people that attend the school. When Brandon connected his knowledge of internment camps to this injustice, he applied his critical consciousness by responding to the social control that the school district had over the schools in South Dallas.

The SAAC program implements a number of strategies for young people to understand social justice but they build this understanding by ensuring the development of critical consciousness. While Brandon illuminated that the SAAC program is achieving their outcomes through intentional programming, SJYD involves more than just building critical consciousness in youth. The SJYD framework and the radical healing model advocate for youth programs to recognize that youth are facing institutional and structural oppression and respond by providing a space for them to heal from the trauma that this oppression inflicts on them (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, Ginwright & James, 2002, Ginwright, 2010a).

The Space to Heal

The SAAC program assisted in building Brandon's critical consciousness but the SDCC served as a space for healing. During our interview, I asked Brandon what he would do if he was ever going through a difficult time and he mentioned how he would first confide in Ms. Vicki and Malik. His next action was to come to the SDCC and play music on the piano.

Yea, I can't say like specific things but yea like I would often talk to Malik or Mama V. about situations and they would like give me advice or you know what I should do. This, that, and the third. You know, yea but I'm also the type of person, I'm not really a, I'm not really an emotional, sentimental you know, I guess that's just how I was raised. I don't like to show the emotions and stuff so I'd rather just go sit and play piano all day. And you know, and by the time I'm finished I'm good, I'm straight. Anytime. I could just go play the piano.

- Brandon

Brandon told me that at any point in time, whether it was during the school year or summer time, he knew that the doors of the SDCC would always be open and he could sit in the recording studio and play the piano. When he played the piano he released

whatever he was upset about or whatever pain he may have been feeling. The SDCC not only provided Brandon with a group of people to confide in when he was going through a tough time, it also provided the space to express his emotions artistically and this facilitated healing for him.

In conclusion, Brandon's thirteen-year involvement with the program provided insight on how the SAAC program applies the SJYD framework through program outcomes (understanding of community, knowledge of history, knowledge of self, and understanding of social justice) lead youth like Brandon to build critical consciousness and have the space to heal. Brandon explained how the SAAC program helped lead him to his passion of music production.

It helped me get everywhere. Every, not saying that I'm just like, you know, where I want to be or anything but by me being able to express myself I got scholarships for college. Like I got a 25,000 dollar scholarship from Full Sail university for, for beats like I submitted original beats and to me, every beat I make is apart of me, you know what I'm saying. So by me expressing myself, I can express myself over music, you know, through the music and how I feel at that specific moment and time. So I learned about expressing myself through the music. Other people may, like the murals, and the paintings on the wall, you know I helped every now and then but the painters here, the ones that like to paint, they express themselves and I also act, I act like it's not really my passion but if I can make money off of it, I will. The ones that love the acting, I'm sure you can, you can see their passion by how much they express themselves and all that stuff. This place will show you. Lead you the way.

- Brandon

Brandon learned that expressing himself through music and following that passion leads to success and this was illustrated when he was awarded a scholarship to attend Full Sail University. This healing space continues to exist for Brandon even after he graduated high school and was no longer in the program. One day during the program I asked Brandon if he had anything else going on this summer while he visited South Dallas, he

responded, *“I don’t know where else I’m supposed to be. This is where I’ve spent every summer since I was five. This is where I’m supposed to be.”* Once Brandon told me this, I recognized that the SDCC served as a healing space that Brandon knew he could always return back to and everyone would receive him with open arms and support. The SDCC represented community and love for Brandon.

Summary/Conclusion

This chapter examined how the SAAC program built critical consciousness in the youth. The combination of reflection and social action is considered critical consciousness within the SJYD framework and it serves as one of the four components of the radical healing process. The SAAC program provided youth with a number of opportunities to work on building their critical consciousness. One way the program built critical consciousness was by placing a focus on the development of critical thinking skills through the creation and maintenance of what Harold refers to as a “culture of critical thinking.” Another critical element of how the program cultivated critical consciousness was through Brandon’s story which applied the SJYD framework the program outcomes: 1) understanding community, 2) knowledge of history, 3) knowledge of self, 4) understanding social justice. This culture of critical thinking adopts the process of using instances of misunderstandings as tools for in-depth discussions and experiences that encourage youth to think critically. I argue that this culture of critical thinking assist youth in understanding the value of reflection, one element of critical consciousness.

Brandon's story sheds light on the ways in which intentional programming and duration are significant factors in the development of critical consciousness. Having spent thirteen years of his life attending the SAAC program, Brandon expressed how the SDCC advanced his knowledge of history, knowledge of self, understanding of community, and understanding of social justice. In addition to this, it provided Brandon with a space to heal, a form of social action and an important aspect of SJYD.

One important aspect of the building of critical consciousness at the SAAC program is that at each moment that led to the development of critical consciousness, teachers were listening to the youth. Ginwright refers to this as the teachers serving as "guides" in the development of critical consciousness process as oppose to wise "elders" (2010a, p. 87). The teachers truly guide the building of critical consciousness for youth at the SAAC program by creating and maintaining a culture of critical thinking and supporting them through the moments of reflection, social action, and healing. Just as youth develop critical consciousness through their engagement with a culture of critical thinking, they also develop a positive cultural identity through critical pedagogical practices. The following chapter will explore the ways in which the hip-hop education classes held at the SAAC program applied what is referred to as critical hip-hop pedagogy (CHHP) to facilitate the development of positive cultural identity, a component of the radical healing process.

CHAPTER V

HIP-HOP EDUCATION: CULTURAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND CRITICAL HIP-HOP PEDAGOGY

Introduction

In this chapter I will apply Akom's (2009) Critical Hip-hop Pedagogy (CHHP) framework, a framework that centers social justice and liberation for Black youth, to explore the ways in which hip-hop education classes became critical sites where positive racial cultural identity development took place at the SAAC program. First, I will provide an overview of CHHP and its relationship to the SJYD framework. Second, I will give a description of the two hip-hop education classes taught at the SAAC program and place them at the center of a discussion surrounding cultural identity development. Third, I will describe the tools the hip-hop education teachers used to promote positive cultural identity development. Finally, I will provide detail into the processes that disrupted the development of cultural identity. As a result of placing hip-hop education as the focal point of this chapter, CHHP framework will be used to guide each section of this chapter.

Culture is one of the four components of the radical healing process and while Ginwright (2010a) tends to focus on the cultural identity aspect of culture, it is important to shed light on the definitive ways culture is contested in social science fields, including youth development. Conceptualizing culture provides insight into what the field of youth development defines as cultural identity development. Before delving into defining

cultural identity development, I will first discuss the concept of culture within the context of the radical healing model and SJYD. Basing his definition on Williams' (1983) conceptualization of culture, Storey (2009) proposes that culture can be defined as 1) a process for spiritual, intellectual, and aesthetic development, 2) a way of life in regards to a people, a period, or a group, and 3) works and practices of intellectual and specifically artistic activity.

Defining culture in these three ways provides a basis for deconstructing how Black youth develop an identity that becomes intertwined with cultures, specifically ones that include sub-cultures like hip-hop. Connecting the definitions of culture above to SJYD and the radical healing model, I argue that cultural identity development for Black youth can be viewed as an ongoing process where value is placed on sharing knowledge as a collective promotes social activism and engagement. SJYD refutes the idea of viewing youth as passive consumers of knowledge and promotes the importance of viewing youth as possessing critical knowledge that promotes social changes in their communities and globally (Ginwright, et al., 2005). Through the lens of SJYD, cultural identity development is a collective process where youth and SJYD programs incorporate artistic activity as a daily practice that becomes critical to the development of a young person's identity.

This case study found that cultural identity development at the SAAC was connected to the three ways Storey (2009) defines culture. First, the SAAC program promoted the development of cultural identity for Black youth by focusing on intellectual growth through classes like the hip-hop education classes. Second, the

SAAC program utilizes classrooms as critical sites where cultural identity development is formed through collective exchange of knowledge like the history and significance of hip-hop culture. Third, the SAAC program centers and values the importance of artistic activities like the art of hip-hop dance or music production. Ginwright (2010a) connects the culture component of the radical healing process to hip-hop culture when he writes,

Identity development for black youth, in this sense, is not simply and individual process, but involves a collective exchange of ideas, symbols, and meanings that protect, defend, and reestablish the social category for Black youth. For example, hip-hop culture has been used as a politicizing tool to inform youth about significant social problems (Kelly, 1996; Rose, 1994). Since the mid-1980s, groups such as Public Enemy seized the attention of many urban youth of color because of their ability to boldly criticize and reveal serious contradictions in American democracy. Rap artists like Chuck D, KRS1, and Arrested Development called for youth to raise their consciousness about American society and become more critical about the conditions of poverty. Hip-hop groups such as Dead Prez, the Coup, and the Roots today provide black youth with an analysis of racism, poverty, sexism, and other forms of oppression. For many Black youth, hip-hop culture is a vehicle for radical healing because it provides a space in which to express pain, anger, and the frustration of oppression (p. 142).

Although Ginwright (2010a) mentions the importance of connecting hip-hop culture to cultural identity development for Black youth, he does not provide an in-depth examination of the processes involved in how this development occurs.

Social Justice Youth Development and Critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy

I conceptualize cultural identity as an identity assigned to and/or selected by an individual based on a specific group (i.e., racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group). Cultural identity is also understood as a developmental process (Phinney, 1992). This case study examined how Black or African American youth develop positive cultural

identity through the lens of the SJYD framework where Ginwright and Cammarota (2002) propose that youth social justice outcomes related to awareness of self includes “self-evaluation and self-exploration to achieve a positive sense of self and social and cultural identity” (p. 88).

The self-awareness outcome in the SJYD framework (see Chapter I for an overview) promotes the importance of youth engaging in self-evaluation and self-exploration through inward reflection, a process where one examines what makes up their identity. At this level of SJYD youth are encouraged to explore issues surrounding their identity (e.g., race, class, gender, and sexuality) and understand how these issues are both personal and political. It is important to note that self-awareness within the SJYD framework promotes the celebration of ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity and focus on youth learning how to analyze the ways in which power, privilege, and oppression threaten identity formation and self-determination (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Throughout this chapter I conceptualize cultural identity as encompassing racial identity. While cultural identity and racial identity are not synonymous terms, this chapter will attempt to understand how discussions around racial identity affect positive cultural identity development.

According to Ginwright and Cammarota (2002), “[the] key to self-awareness is an understanding of how identity is closely tied to privilege or oppression through the use and/or misuse of power. Once young people see the connection between identity and power relationships, they develop a healthy self-awareness that recognizes how oppression and privilege mark their own struggles and the struggles of others” (2002, p.

89). This case study examined cultural identity development, specifically related to positive African and African American cultural identity development. Hip-hop culture emerged as an integral part of the development of positive African and African American cultural identity development through the case study research. For this case study, hip-hop is conceptualized as a youth culture founded by youth of color who used artistic expression to address sociopolitical issues (Chang, 2007, Perry, 2004, Kitwana, 2002, Rose, 1994). As a result of imperialist white supremacy capitalist heteropatriarchy (hooks, 1996) hip-hop culture seems far removed from its sociopolitical foundations but one can still find both social justice and sociopolitical themes through an in-depth examination of the culture.

A number of youth programs use a social justice perspective or approach to incorporate engagement with hip-hop culture into the curriculum for youth as a way to achieve program outcomes related to self-awareness, self-determination, and artistic expression skills (see Tyson, 2002; Ginwright, 2004; Clay, 2003; Travis & Deepak, 2011; Clay, 2012). These programs use the numerous elements of hip-hop culture like spoken word poetry, music production, dance, and visual arts to achieve these outcomes and this process is generally referred to as hip-hop education. A background of hip-hop education and specifically the Critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy (CHHP) framework will be discussed below to shed light on how program processes were examined in two of the program's hip-hop education classes.

Hip-Hop Education

Hip-hop education is founded on what is referred to as hip-hop pedagogy. This form of pedagogy is used as a tool to “bring out, construct, interpret, reflect, and build upon people’s experience and challenges” (Diaz, 2011, p. 2). Hip-hop pedagogy is implemented in a number of ways and generally looks different depending on the space and group of people engaging with it. Hip-hop education incorporates a number of teaching and learning theories but praxis, the process of engaging in critical reflection and implementing a planned action, is widely used across hip-hop education programs and curriculum (Akom, 2009, Hill, 2009, Ibrahim, 1999, Stovall, 2006). Frameworks like Critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy (CHHP) view hip-hop as a form of liberatory praxis where individuals are active agents in their education (Akom, 2009).

CHHP upholds the idea that both youth and their hip-hop education teachers “re-examine their knowledge of hip-hop as it intersects with race, gender, class, and sexual orientation” (Akom, 2009, p. 52). CHHP applies the pedagogy of Freire (1970), Critical Race Theory (CRT) of Delgado and Stefancic (2012), and Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) approach of Cammarota and Fine (2010) to create spaces where resilience and resistance can be developed. The liberatory principles of CHHP include agency, equity, and self-determination. These principles are connected to the SJYD framework and radical healing model through the conceptualization of critical consciousness development to achieve social, community, and global levels of wellness (See Chapter I and Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002).

These levels of wellness are reached when youth engage in praxis by applying agency and self-determination to advocate for equity and social change. Throughout the process of developing the three levels of wellness, youth of color are also developing a positive cultural identity. CHHP requires teachers and researchers to commit to social justice and action as a step in the process of teaching and doing research (Akom, 2009). This commitment to social justice and action requires that youth develop a positive cultural identity. Without a positive cultural identity, youth may not hold the capacity to develop self-determination and participate in actions to create social change. The following CHHP elements guided the analysis of the data collected on the two hip-hop education classes implemented at the program: (1) critical pedagogy, (2) self-determination, (3) agency.

Bercaw and Stooksberry (2004) propose that there are three tenants of critical pedagogy. These tenets are made up of “(1) a reflection upon the individual’s culture or lived experience, (2) development of voice through a critical look at one’s world and society, which takes place in dialogue with others, and (3) transforming the society toward equality for all citizens through active participation in democratic imperatives” (Bercaw & Stooksberry, 2004, p. 2). The results of this case study sets out to add to the growing body of literature on the existence and processes involved in CHHP by exploring the entity of critical pedagogy within hip-hop education classes.

According to the CHHP framework, critical pedagogy leads to the promotion of self-determination which incites agency in young people (Akom, 2009). The findings of this case study supported this argument and found that the building of self-determination

and positive cultural identity motivates youth to become agents in their own development of skills that facilitate healing in some areas and disruptions to healing in others.

Hip-Hop Education Classes at the Program

Background

During the summer of 2015 the SAAC program offered two hip-hop education classes for youth participants in the teen group. Youth between the ages of thirteen and sixteen in the teen group of the SAAC program participated in both hip-hop education classes. While hip-hop is a fairly new culture that emerged in the early 1970's, SAAC program leaders view it as an important part of African American history and it was incorporated into the summer 2015 curriculum. Program leaders set the following outcomes for the two hip-hop education classes: (1) youth will gain new knowledge on the history of hip-hop culture and (2) youth will gain new skills in hip-hop music production and hip-hop dance. One of the hip-hop education classes focused on hip-hop history and dance while the other hip-hop education class focused on hip-hop history and music production.

Knowledge of African diasporic history, including African American history, is one outcome of the SAAC program. Program leaders place a focus on history within the SAAC curriculum to ensure that youth that attend the program feel empowered with knowledge of self as it relates to the history of their ancestors (i.e., people of African descent). Site observations were collected in both hip-hop education classes throughout

the 5 weeks of the summer 2015 program. Analysis of site observations along with interviews with teachers and youth participants offer an insight into how the SAAC program promoted cultural identity development and handled disruptions or disturbances to cultural identity development. Data analyzed from the two hip-hop education classes also provided insight on the processes involved in empowering youth cultural identity development through hip-hop education. Before providing the results of the case study, background on the two hip-hop education classes are discussed below.

Hip-Hop Dance Class

The purpose of the hip-hop dance class was to provide youth participants with opportunities to develop skills in hip-hop dance and new knowledge about the history of hip-hop including how the globalization of hip-hop has influenced the African diaspora using Senegal as an example. The hip-hop dance class teacher, referred to as Keith or Mr. Keith at the SDCC, was a professional dancer who utilized his specialty in hip-hop dance to teach the course. In addition, through conversations with Keith, I discovered that he grew up during the inception and Golden Age of hip-hop. According to hip-hop journalist and scholar, Kitwana (2002), Keith would be considered a member of the hip-hop generation. The hip-hop generation is defined as the first generation to grow up in post-segregation U.S. or in other words, individuals born after the passing of civil rights act of 1964 in the United States (Kitwana, 2002). During his time as the editor of *The Source: the magazine of hip-hop music culture and politics*, Kitwana adopted the term “the hip-hop generation” to refer to members of Generation X who were born between 1965 and 1984 and identified with the culture of hip-hop (Kitwana, 2002).

Through conversations with Keith I learned that he came of age during a time when hip-hop was moving past the boroughs of New York City and reaching cities across the country. I connect Keith's engagement with hip-hop culture during his coming of age with the strong investment he had in ensuring that his students were aware of the history of hip-hop culture. Keith admitted that he came into the program without an exact plan of how he would approach teaching the class but he was determined for the youth participants to learn about specific hip-hop artists and how they shaped the history of hip-hop music and culture.

So I came in without a game plan, even without an outline. It was just loosey-goosey. Hip-hop, Senegal, dance. I didn't even necessarily know what the end result was going to be. I don't know if it's supposed to culminate into something because I didn't necessarily ask, because it's five weeks. And when I kind of got the gist of it after the first day, it was more so like okay, I'm only here for four hours out of the week. What all could I really do? And then starting to talk to them and realizing retention or the lack thereof, or whatever, wasn't quite there. I'm like okay, we definitely got to shift and I'm not going to budge off of this. So if we got to— you can get tired of me asking you who Public Enemy is or who DJ Kool Herc is...but you're going to at least know something and I'm not going to take, I don't know.

- Keith

Although Keith did not necessarily have a specific set of lessons planned out for the class, he was focused on ensuring that the youth learned about the history of hip-hop. The two-hour hip-hop dance class was divided into two sections and took place in a large activity room at the SDCC.

For approximately the first hour of class, youth participants learned about the history of hip-hop culture. Keith engaged students on topics related to the significance of the South Bronx within hip-hop culture, artists known to have started the culture like Afrikaa Bambaata and DJ Kool Herc, how modern day hip-hop culture perpetuates

oppression, and how globalization has brought hip-hop culture to youth all over the world. Youth were then given a five to ten-minute break and for the last hour of class they got out of their chairs and danced. Youth participants learned basic dances that came out of hip-hop culture like the bounce, the rock, and the sidestep. All of the dances youth learned were to be incorporated into a final showcase where youth participants would perform a dance, with the direction of Keith, for their family, friends, and community at the end of the five weeks.

While youth were eager to learn new information around the history of hip-hop culture and its relationship to the way they engage with hip-hop music in the U.S. versus the way youth in Senegal engage in hip-hop culture, many of them were not interested in dancing and this created tension between the youth participants and their teacher. This tension ended up creating disruptions to the positive development of youth participant's cultural identity as it relates to hip-hop culture discussed at the end of this chapter.

Hip-Hop Music Production Class

The purpose of the hip-hop production class was to provide youth participants with opportunities to develop skills in hip-hop music production and new knowledge about the history of hip-hop including how the globalization of hip-hop has influenced the African diaspora, using Senegal as an example. The hip-hop music production teacher, referred to as Malik or Mr. Malik at the SDCC, is a professional hip-hop music producer who works for a popular record label in the United States. Malik used his expertise in hip-hop music production and experiences in the hip-hop music industry to develop the activities for his class.

Throughout the five weeks of the program youth participant watched films about how hip-hop music influence youth living in Senegal, heard stories about Malik's experiences working with famous hip-hop artists, learned the art of music sampling and beat making, and engaged in dialogue about having positive views about their blackness. When asked about the outcomes of the hip-hop production class, Malik mentioned that all he looked for was that youth experience positivity and growth in his class. I learned how he became involved with the SAAC program and the approach he used to structure a classroom that fosters the outcomes he sets out for the youth participants that take his class each summer.

She [Ms. Vicki] asked me when could I – how would I then see myself involved in it and [I] came up with a program where pretty much I am helping kids make beats. Help expose them to a world that they might really be interested in, if they didn't know how to get into or even really start on the production side. Because I know a lot, as argued in particular they love art. So it's like, it helps when you have somebody that does it professionally come into, not a classroom setting, so to speak. And that's what made it cool for me; that it was a city center not a 'school' school, because in the school setting, I'm not the one. I'm not the person that I can go into a structured school setting in somebody's elementary, middle or any type of school, because I'm probably not going to be the image that you want of a teacher. I'm not going to act like that because I'm not that. So that's how I got into it really. She told me that there wouldn't be parameters and structures like that and I can tailor my program and make it to where I would be – think, where I feel it would be effective along with their theme. And so we were very successful at making that happen and help cultivate some young minds over here.

- Malik

Malik catered the hip-hop production class to youth who were interested in becoming producers of hip-hop music but he made sure that they understood that being a hip-hop producer involved understanding your culture and the history of the music you produce.

The two-hour music production class took place in one of the smaller rooms of the SDCC but Malik used this to his advantage by creating an inviting environment for

the youth participants in his class. The room had two work stations where youth could use Apple's *Garage Band* program and a beat machine, also referred to as a drum machine, to make hip-hop beats. Some of the class meetings throughout the five weeks were dedicated to learning the actual process of music production while other class meetings were used to view films and video clips about hip-hop history in the U.S. and in Senegal. For example, one of the computers was used to view films and video clips about how youth in Senegal use hip-hop music to advocate for social and political change.

In addition to this, Malik spent time in the classroom just getting to know the youth participants by asking each of them questions related to their favorite musical genre and artist. While all youth participants had to watch the films and video clips and engage in discussion with each other and their teacher, they were not forced to participate in the music production portion of the class if they did not want to. The structure of the hip-hop music production class facilitated radical healing as a result of the teacher implementing critical pedagogy to promote self-determination and agency in the youth participants.

Upon developing an understanding of the structure and outcomes each hip-hop education teacher adopted provided insight on how cultural identity was facilitated in each classroom. Keith and Malik used different tools for their approach to promoting positive cultural identity development in their hip-hop education classes. The following section will illuminate the ways in which elements of the CHHP framework (critical

pedagogy, self-determination, and agency) discussed above are applied to and used for cultural identity development among youth that attend the SAAC program.

Tools for Cultural Identity Development

Applying Critical Pedagogy

Keith facilitated the essence of applying critical pedagogy by having youth participants reflect on their cultural identity and connect it to their lived experiences. Based on Akom's (2009) explanation of critical pedagogy, promoting the importance of the lived experiences of youth is an integral part of applying critical pedagogy and should be adopted as a process within hip-hop education classrooms. Applying this aspect of critical pedagogy, Keith mentioned his desire for youth participants to reflect on the June 2015 incident that happened in McKinney, Texas where a group of Black teenagers were forced out of a neighborhood swimming pool by local neighborhood residents and police. Images of police pulling a gun on unarmed Black youth and even pushing a young Black girl to the ground and sitting on top of her had been circulating all over the news and social media leading up to the start of the SAAC program.

Even getting them to kind of, so what did you feel about seeing these images of the news, in McKinney, because that can happen here? Actually, it'd probably be worse if it was down here in the hood. How they would come in and possibly corral or do whatever. How do you all feel about that? How do you feel about hearing about this shooting, now that shooting? Have you ever felt like you've been discriminated against just because of the color of your skin, not because you're a good or bad person, but being just straight up judged by the color of your skin? Have you been in those situations?

- Keith

Opportunity to reflect on this incident provided youth participant's freedom to connect the ways in which the color of their skin effects how they are treated in their community and by society.

Reflecting on the incident in McKinney and its connection to personal experiences around racial discrimination is a critical step in applying critical pedagogy, as the lived experiences of discrimination assist Black youth in conceptualizing their racial identity. Keith extends this discussion with youth participants when he asks them to reflect on the concept of colorism¹¹.

I say better yet, let's take it down internally. For my dark skinned people, how have you been feeling? For my light skinned people, how have you been feeling? Because we do it to each other as a community, it's been passed down. Well, I guess, I'm dark and I don't want to go in the sun because I'm going to get black, okay. Yeah, those sayings like that, yeah, they come from somewhere. But there's a whole group of people who can't even stand to be in the sun or else they'll burn. There's people out there trying to get your color, even though they claim to hate you. So just even, I mean, it's just so much. It's just so much. Like I say, hopefully, they come away with something.

- Keith

Actively engaging youth participants in discussion around critical issues they face in their communities is considered critical pedagogy because it centers their lived experiences as Black youth living in South Dallas and attending the summer program.

Prior to this discussion on colorism, many youth participants would have debates during their free time about being on what they refer to as “#teamlightskin” and “#teamdarkskin¹².” Some of the youth participants even taunted each other about which

¹¹ Colorism is “the process of discrimination that privileges light-skinned people of color over their dark-skinned counterparts” (Hunter, 2007, p. 237).

¹² #teamlightskin and #teamdarkskin refer to popular social media hashtags used by Black youth and adults that signify if an individual identifies with and in some ways even proud of either their dark or light

team was better than the other. For example, Bug would tell her close friend Gaia, “*There’s nothing wrong with being dark, dark skin is beautiful*” as a way to let Gaia know that she was ashamed of being on #teamdarkskin. While youth participants were engaging in colorism by dividing themselves into “#teamlightskin” and “#teamdarkskin,” Bug’s response showed the ways in which youth who identified with “#teamdarkskin” resisted the notion that “#teamlightskin” was better. This was an example of how complex issues around colorism existed at the SAAC program. Youth displayed colorism by dividing each other into light skin and dark skin groups, but refused to accept the notion that one shade of skin was better than the other. The application of critical pedagogy was critical to how youth participants contextualized colorism.

Keith facilitated a discussion on colorism that the youth were already having with each other during their free time. However, youth participants were provided opportunities to engage in a colorism discussion during class time in order to connect their lived experiences around this issue of being on “#teamlightskin” or “#teamdarkskin,” to skin color privilege. Understanding how closely connected skin color is to privilege is another step in youth participant’s conceptualization of their racial identity. Bringing youth participants to a space where they have opportunities to reflect on their lived experiences through the lens of their racial group is a tool used in critical pedagogy to develop a positive cultural identity. When youth begin to exhibit a sense of

skin color. For more information on these social media hashtags and concepts see book chapter “Writing (about) the Black Female Body” in *Black Women and Popular Culture: The Conversation Continues* (Goldman, et al., 2014).

pride around factors related to their racial identity like skin color, I argue that they are going through the process of developing a positive cultural identity. Through these reflections, youth participants get closer to developing a positive cultural identity in that they gain an understanding that their lived experiences around racial discrimination are shared experiences among Black people as a collective.

The promotion of cultural identity as it relates to a youth participant's Black identity transpired in the hip-hop music production class and provided another example of the connection between critical pedagogy and cultural identity development. More specifically, my participant-observations, reported in an entry from my field notes below, shed light on the specific process Malik used to promote a positive view of self as it relates to cultural identity.

Today during the hip-hop music production class I observed Bug work on the beat machine. She started to get frustrated and the teacher noticed. He came over and looked over what she was doing and proceeded to ask her, "Bug, what are you doing?" She looked at him and said, "I'm trying to make this beat." He asked her, "so what do you usually start with when you're making a beat?" She responded, "I don't know, I started here." The teacher said, "right, and that's why it's not sounding right." The teacher then pointed to Bug's hand and said, "what does this mean?" Bug said, "what?" He pointed at her hand again and asked her the same question, "what does this mean?" She gave him a look of confusion. He then pointed at her hand again and said, "you see this," as he pointed to the outside of her hand attempting to signify her skin color. "This means that you always start with the drums. No matter what beat you're making, you always start with the drums.

- Aishia's Field Notes

I deconstruct the connection that Malik made between the musical sound of drums and Bug's Black identity, when he pointed to the skin on the outside of her hand, as a critical pedagogy process for the development of positive cultural identity. Malik performed this application of critical pedagogy by building a connection for Bug between her identity as

a Black youth and its connection to one of the most important parts of hip-hop music and culture, the drums. Based on the interaction between Bug and Malik, I argue that Malik gave Bug the space to think about how important her identity as a Black youth is the creation and production of hip-hop culture and this application of critical pedagogy instilled Bug with a sense of power that connected to her racial identity. In addition to this, Malik engaged Bug in a way that celebrated her racial identity by connecting it to her blackness.

The SAAC program promotes drumming as an integral part of music throughout the African diaspora. In previous summers, Bug participated in an African drumming class and she shared with me that this class taught her how the drum, which is the foundation of nearly every hip-hop music beat, is important to 1) keep the rhythm of the music and 2) people of African descent. Bug also shared with me that drums have been used to communicate throughout history and currently through the art of drumming and beat making in hip-hop. Bug was reminded about the importance of drums by her Malik on that day and I argue that the act of connecting the two concepts of racial identity and drumming pushed Bug to think critically about Black culture and her connection to it. During an interview with Bug, she reflects on this topic.

When I first started, I didn't know nothing. Not really. Nothing, but once I was here going through each summer camp with this, I learned more and more about it, and then that made me realize that our culture like pretty much everything like we started everything...

- Bug

Bug's use of the terms "we" and "our" in her explanation of what she learned by attending the SAAC program each summer illuminates how she views her identity in relation to ownership of Black culture.

Bug recognizes that almost everything related to modern day popular culture is connected to some element of Black culture. In the quote above, she feels that she holds power because she is a part of a group that created the foundation of nearly every element and fiber that makes up modern day popular culture. Critical pedagogy requires reflection on one's individual culture and the statement above provides an example of the result of the application of this form of pedagogy where Bug is empowered through the positive development of her cultural identity. These instances of how the teachers Keith and Malik applied critical pedagogy in both the hip-hop dance and music production classes provide insight on how positive cultural identity is developed at the SAAC program.

Through the implementation of critical pedagogy in the hip-hop education classes at the SAAC program, youth are able to engage in discussion about (1) how their racial identity connects to their lived experiences around discrimination and colorism and (2) how gaining new knowledge about the history and importance of specific cultural practices, like the significance of drums and the art of drumming, relate to how youth participants conceptualized the power they hold as a member of their racial group. The process involved in applying critical pedagogy in the hip-hop education classrooms required an acknowledgement that youth must understand how their racial and cultural identity are connected. This is what led to the facilitation of positive cultural identity for

youth in the program, like Bug. It is important to note that while Keith and Malik both applied critical pedagogical practices to facilitate positive cultural identity, youth exercised their agency in developing a positive cultural identity through the development of self-determination in the hip-hop education classes.

Developing Self-Determination

CHHP requires an assertion of self-determination as one of its liberatory principles and this case study examined the processes that the program, and more specifically the hip-hop education classes, facilitate to develop a strong sense of self-determination in the youth they serve. A number of youth participants in the hip-hop education classes already held a strong sense of self-determination when I began collecting data at the start of this 5-week case study. I use the term self-determination here to refer to “both the attitudes which lead people to define goals for themselves and to their ability to take the initiative to achieve these goals” (Ward, 1988, p. 2). Keith held critical conversations with youth participants during class in order to foster self-determination.

And like I always have to tell people, you have to know yourself and you have to be real with yourself. And part of it is you may not even reach that level. It doesn't mean you have to give up. I was encouraging them, no matter what I give you, go and research on your own and if you have questions about it come back and ask me. And if I don't know we'll figure out together.

- Keith

Based on his statements above, Keith was sure to be realistic with the youth about the importance of recognizing that they may not necessarily reach the level of expertise in hip-hop dance that they are striving for but they should continue to set goals and work to achieve them with the help of caring adults.

In addition to this, Keith also focused on the importance of youth participants doing their own research about topics they were interested in. For example, on the first day of the hip-hop dance class youth participants were assigned homework where they had to do research on the following hip-hop artists: *Public Enemy*, *Grand Master Flash*, *Krazy Legs*, *Run DMC*, *Afrikaa Bambataa and the Universal Zulu Nation*, *DJ Kool Herc*, and *The Sugar Hill Gang*. Youth participants had the opportunity to select which artists they wanted to research and were instructed to write two paragraphs providing background information on the artist and an explanation of the contributions their selected artist made to hip-hop culture.

Although the homework was assigned, youth had the opportunity to select which artist they were interested in studying and this provided an opportunity to become an agent in their own development of cultural identity. Youth participants were interested in learning about the history of hip-hop culture, the culture that they closely identify with. By assigning the homework, Keith encouraged youth to take action towards learning more about the history of hip-hop culture and I argue that this is an example of the process involved in building self-determination at the SAAC program. While Keith facilitated the development of self-determination by assigning homework, Malik took a different approach by recognizing the barriers to self-determination and attempting to overcome them in his classroom.

Malik pointed out the importance of providing a space where barriers to developing self-determination are broken. During an interview with Malik, I learned that

a great deal of breaking down barriers to self-determination within in his classroom had to do with his attitudes as their teacher.

I've seen a lot of kids go from a point where they were very shy or worried about classrooms opinions of their peers. And they kind of broke out of that because they realized when you get into, when you get into this realm, there's only one person that's doing this professionally and that's me. And even I can make mistakes. So everything is not always going to be perfect. It's always a lot of trial and error and once you get over that, then it breaks that wall down of what's cool and what's not and that's half the battle. After that it's just about them taking the initiative and then somebody doing something. Because once one of the class members does it and it's like they can do it really. So I guess that them being open and really just trying something; that's very insecure. They have no real reason to try unless they really wanted to. But I think that's what it is, breaking down a barrier of what's cool, what's not, and then being afraid to make a mistake.

- Malik

Based on Malik's statements above, it was clear that breaking down barriers to self-determination in his classroom consisted of empowering the youth by helping them realize that he did not have all the answers.

Throughout my time conducting participant-observations in Malik's classroom, I saw him apply what is referred to as co-facilitating within the CHHP framework where teachers and youth facilitate the production of knowledge together (Akom, 2009). For example, one youth participant, Justice, had taken the hip-hop music production class last summer when he attended the SAAC program and already knew how to work the *Garage Band* music production computer software. While Justice was working at one of the workstations one day during the music production class, Oumar sat next to him and began to observe what Justice was doing. Malik walked over and asked Oumar, "you want to get on and try?" Oumar agreed and switched chairs with Justice so he was sitting in front of the computer. Malik then said, "okay Justice, you teach Oumar how to do

this” and then he walked away from them, sat in a chair on the opposite side of the room, and started talking to another youth participant in the class.

I argue that this was what co-facilitation looked like in the hip-hop production class. Justice held the skills and the knowledge to teach Oumar how to make his own beat and Justice felt empowered by knowing that Malik believed that his music production skills were good enough to teach one of his peers. Justice expressed his sense of self-determination by not shying away from teaching Oumar how to work the *Garage Band* computer program. In the hip-hop production class co-facilitation was used as a practice to empower youth and assist them in developing their self-determination.

In addition to co-facilitation practices, Malik believed in the importance of not forcing youth to participate in the music production portion of the class if they did not want to.

Yeah, it's kind of freedom to really operate you know. If you want to do this, you know what I'm saying, then by all means, come on let's work. If you don't want to then – I'm not force feeding anything because this is not something that you're going to have – this is not something that you're going to do because somebody else wants you to.

- Malik

I view this as an important part of the development of self-determination in the youth at the program. If a young person is self-determined, they are creating their own thoughts and attitudes toward achieving a specific goal or task and there is no forceful action from adults or teachers (Ward, 1988). The outcome of providing youth with the space in the hip-hop music production class to make their own decisions promoted development of their self-determination.

Bugs comments below about the importance of the hip-hop music production class was to her creative abilities shed light on how not forcing youth to participate in activities promotes the development of their self-determination.

SO real in here! You can be. You not worried 'bout nothing. ' You can just sit, make beats, chill. [I learned] How to be one with like self. And you know and learning more about the machines and making beats and how to combine things together and how to create-actually create something. So yeah. Its like he gives us a chance to be creative and when we do like each song. It pushes us to try.

Bug mentions being pushed to try but it is important to note that I never observed Malik pushing or forcing her to make a hip-hop beat. Bug pushed herself to try after she made the decision that she wanted to learn more about hip-hop music production.

In the hip-hop music production class, youth participants were not taught self-determination, they developed it by having an inviting space that did not pressure them into meeting a certain type of expectation associated with making a “perfect hip-hop beat” or even making a hip-hop beat at all. While youth participants like Bug, Justice, and Oumar actively made the decision to participate during the music production portion of the class, there were many youth participants in the class that just sat in their chairs and played games, texted on their phones, and posted things on social media platforms like kik, Instagram, and Snapchat.

Youth practitioners and researchers tend to focus on the importance of youth being fully engaged in all youth program activities but Malik followed a different philosophy where he recognized that not all youth participants would be interested in music production. Malik recognized that forcing the youth to participate would not assist them in developing their self-determination and that recognition is what in fact assisted

Bug, Justice, and Oumar to develop self-determination. As oppose to following the PYD framework where achieving youth engagement is integral to its application, Malik applied a framework connected to SJYD, the CHHP framework where youth engagement is not viewed as an outcome.

The CHHP framework views youth engagement as one of many processes or strategies to use to promote self-determination. For the youth enrolled in Malik and Keith's hip-hop education classes, self-determination was an outcome and tools like setting goals with youth, co-facilitating, and not centering youth engagement facilitated the development of self-determination among youth participants in the program. In addition to the CHHP framework liberatory principle of self-determination, the principle of agency also emerged as in the hip-hop education classes at the SAAC program.

Agency through Artistic Expression

The CHHP framework considers agency a principle of liberation. The term agency here is used to refer to “young people’s ability to analyze and respond to problems impeding their social and economic advancement” (Cammarota, & Ginwright, 2008, p. 2). The CHHP framework conceptualizes agency as taking action towards liberation. Malik stated that in his classroom he encourages youth, “*to learn how to be able to put actions with words and words with actions and look at patterns and know history.*” This statement from Malik signifies the importance of action but also sheds light on providing the space for youth to be creative with the ways they express or show action towards agency.

Artistic expression operated as a form of action towards agency in the hip-hop education classes. Through interviews with both youth participants and their hip-hop education teachers, Keith and Malik, I found that artistic expression was used as tool for liberation in that it facilitated healing and the release of pain. One example of this is when Keith expressed the importance of using artistic expression to heal himself and others.

And I always tell people as artists we're definitely put on this planet to heal, because you can heal through the arts, but in that healing process to even know how to heal you have to go through a lot yourself to be able to communicate whatever vehicle that you are blessed with, whatever talent you are blessed with. I don't care if it's singing, I don't care if it's dancing, I don't care if it's playing the instrument, I don't care what it is. I'm like, but it's to actually have another way to communicate the hardships and even the good parts of life, through a way that doesn't always have to be talked about, through an audience that can get it for themselves internally and individually as well.

- Keith

Keith conceptualizes healing, in his words above, as a process where one recognizes their lived experiences as tools for healing. This is connected with the radical healing model because the radical healing process advocates that youth and the adults that work with them recognize the structural and personal social toxins, which come from lived experiences, in order for the healing process to occur (Ginwright, 2010a).

I then connect this to how two of the youth participants expressed the importance of the hip-hop dance class to having the space to heal from and release pain. Oumar mentioned, *"It's like me and Mr. Keith connect with each other because like I love to dance. I dance to get away the pain I go through everyday and I, when I get away from my childhood I dance anything. I dance."* Egypt, another youth participant expressed that *"...hip-hop dance it make me feel like, cause I like hip-hop and I know I can dance and it*

just make, it feel like a release.” Based on Egypt’s and Oumar’s statements, these youth participants developed an understanding on how forms of artistic expression like hip-hop dance can assist them in developing the tools that facilitate the process of healing from pain.

I conceptualize the act of dancing as a form of agency that promotes liberation for youth participants because when Oumar expresses how dance helps him “get away the pain,” he is engaging in a form of action that liberates him from the pain. Oumar also mentioned how feeling connected to the hip-hop dance teacher attributed to his love for dance. This was one instance of how youth developing positive caring relationships with their hip-hop education teachers facilitated agency at the SAAC program. Malik also shed light on how the building of positive caring relationships with one of his former students, Brandon, developed his agency and made the hip-hop music production class more effective for all the youth enrolled in the class.

He [Brandon] single-handedly helped push the program forward honestly for a very large reason that he took an initiative to want to do his music and would help me with other kids. And like I said, as a student, even though I’m showing him different things and showing him little tricks and he considers me a mentor, because that’s what he put on me really. I didn’t go to him and say “Yo, I’m going to mentor you,” anything like that. He was like “Yo I want you to be – you’re my mentor.” That’s what he told me directly. And out of that, two, three years of the program and me being involved, I’m not going to say I helped him make a decision, but he would ask me opinions about what he should do in college and where he wants to go and the direction he’s trying to do; with his musical career and other like aspects of life. And I can’t say – like I said, I had a big influence but some of the steps that I kind of recommended, he took it upon himself and he’s making those steps right now.

- Malik

Brandon’s agency, discussed by Malik above, is represented not only through the actions he took in the hip-hop music production class by teaching other youth in the program

how to make their own music, but also through the ways in which he approached Malik about mentorship.

The positive caring relationship that Malik established with Brandon through the three years they got to know each other motivated Brandon to take action to build the relationship further and ask Malik for mentorship. This is an example of how the principle of agency within the CHHP framework facilitates youth as agents in their own liberation. For Brandon, the actions he took towards agency helped him establish Malik as a mentor. After this action, Malik provided Brandon with encouragement and support that eventually led him to gain an opportunity to attend a college where he could work towards a bachelor's degree in his favorite form of artistic expression, music production.

Based on the reflections of Oumar, Egypt, and Brandon provided above, agency is enacted around artistic expression. For example, Egypt and Oumar used hip-hop dance as a tool for agency towards their healing and Brandon used hip-hop music production as a tool for agency towards his educational future. Seeing examples of agency within the hip-hop education classes pushed me to ask questions about the motivation behind the youth participant's expression of agency. When discussing youth agency Nogeura and Cannella insist that researchers "need to understand the subjective motivation of the actors involved. As obvious as this might seem, this requires that researchers actually solicit the opinions and perspectives of young people and incorporate them into their findings" (2006, p. 335). This section focused on the importance of centering young people's lived experiences as a tool for the CHHP's three principles of liberation.

The CHHP framework's principles of liberation, consisting of critical pedagogy, self-determination, and agency, were closely connected within this case study. In order for youth to exhibit agency, critical pedagogical practices were used to facilitate self-determination, which gave youth participants a sense of empowerment that led to an action (e.g., dancing, music production, teaching others, etc.). Through these three principles of liberation in the CHHP framework, some youth developed a positive view of their cultural identity. However, it is important to note that disruptions to cultural identity development occurred in the hip-hop education classes. The next section will discuss these disruptions through the lens of the three principles of liberation in the CHHP framework.

Disruptions to Cultural Identity Development

Critical pedagogy includes providing opportunities for youth to develop voice. Youth voice occurs when youth speak up and state their ideas and opinions in spaces where they feel comfortable and respected (Mitra, 2004; Fredricks, et al., 2001). In some instances, the hip-hop dance class provided that space but at other times, youth participant's ideas and opinions were not accepted. Youth were able to recall the new information they learned in the hip-hop dance class. Oumar expressed, "*we learned about the beginning of hip hop and where it started in the Bronx in New York and we learned about yea, a lot.*" Egypt stated, "*I like when we have to learn to do certain dances that are like from the 80's and the 70's.*" When asked about the hip-hop dance class Bug expressed how she felt about the actual act of dancing in the class.

Oh, hip-hop. Hip-hop, we learn stuff in there, like about the history of it, but me personally, I'm not a dancer, I don't like dancing like that. I can like speak or do something else in the back scene, but dancing. If they make me, I'll have—I'll do it but, personally, voluntarily, no.

- Bug

While Bug mentioned that she would dance if she was asked to, other youth participants simply refused to participate in the dancing portion of the hip-hop education dance class.

For example, on the first day of the hip-hop dance class, one of the youth participants, Red, told Keith that he was not going to dance and there was confrontation between them. I recall this interaction in the field notes entry below.

He [Keith] had all of the youth get out of their chairs and join them in the open area of the room. He told them, "we're not gonna use music just yet. I want you all to focus on the moves first." The youth complied and they learned the bounce, the rock, the side-step but the first couple of steps he taught them turned into He stopped everything and looked at Red and asked him, "Are you gonna participate or just stand here?" He went on to tell Red that he doesn't tolerate that in his class. "I don't like when people waste my time. If that's what you're doing here, don't waste my time." So he was just like are you not dancing? and Eric was like, no, straight up told him no. He then looked at Ms. Vicki and said, "I don't like my time wasted so is it okay if ... and Ms. Vicki pointed to Red and told him to come here and she took him out of the room.

- Aishia's Field Notes

Red's refusal to dance during class and the reaction from the hip-hop dance teacher sheds light on the disruptions to cultural identity development that occur when youth participants are not provided the space to use their voice to express their needs in program activities.

While Malik simply allowed youth to sit down in their chairs and not engage in activities if they did not want to, Keith did not structure his class in that way. During the incident described in my field notes entry above, Keith viewed himself as an expert of knowledge within that space and Red resisted this notion by refusing to participate. In

order to better understand this incident, it is important to make note that Keith never asked Red why he refused to dance. However, Ms. Vicki did follow-up with Red when she pulled him out of the room on that day. Later the next day Ms. Vicki told me that since Red started coming to the program over six years ago, he's always struggled to participate in activities that involve getting up and moving around. Ms. Vicki shared with me that Red does better working on activities where he can sit down and express himself, like poetry. She also shared that he writes phenomenal poetry.

As the five weeks of the program progressed I discovered that Red and Bug had similar views about the dance portion of the hip-hop dance class. Since Red was not interested in dance, he did not understand why he should be forced to do it. While it is important to push youth to try new things, critical pedagogy requires the development of voice in young people that “takes place in dialogue with others” (Bercaw & Stooksberry, 2004, p. 2). The incident described above between Red and Keith could not be referred to as dialogue. Red used his voice to resist what he was asked to do but the actual act of respecting a young person for their opinion did not occur because Keith made the decision to kick him out of the class which removed Red from opportunities to engage in what Ginwright (2010a) refers to as collective identity development.

I argue that this incident disrupted the positive development of cultural identity in Red as a result of the lack of opportunity to engage in dialogue with others. Red was not given opportunities to engage in collective identity development with Keith and the other youth participants in the class. If hip-hop dance is conceptualized as a part of hip-hop culture, which falls under Black popular culture, the interaction between Red and

Keith did not foster what Ginwright (2010a) refers to as collective identity development. Ginwright argues that “identity development for Black youth, in this sense, is not simply an individual process, but involves a collective exchange of ideas, symbols, and meanings that protect, defend and reestablish the social category of Black youth” (2010a, p. 142).

Based on a number of the class meetings where I conducted participant-observations in the hip-hop dance class, there were not many instances of the collective exchange of ideas between youth participants and their teacher, Keith. Keith felt as if he had the knowledge and the youth participants were to receive it. This is an example of what Paulo Freire (1970) refers to as the banking model of education where youth are treated as receptacles that receive knowledge and are never viewed as the producers of knowledge. CHHP framework creator, Akom (2009), finds this method of education rather problematic and he highlights the importance of using co-facilitation and co-teaching as a tool for youth empowerment. Due to the fact that youth were not given opportunities to collectively exchange their ideas and thoughts with Keith, they experienced another barrier related to a lack of celebration of current modern-day hip-hop culture.

Youth experienced barriers to developing a positive culture identity in the hip-hop dance class due to the attitudes that the hip-hop dance teacher held towards modern day hip-hop music that the youth listen to. My field notes entry below sheds light on how sometimes Keith’s attitudes towards their generation and the music they listen to.

He told the teen group that their generation did not know how to have fun and that the music they listen to is not hip-hop.

- Aishia's Field Notes

On the day I wrote the field notes entry above, I realized that Keith held a bias towards the time of hip-hop culture when he came of age. His membership in the hip-hop generation and the youth participant's membership in what is now referred to as the post hip-hop generation (Asante, 2008), was a barrier that both the hip-hop dance teacher and the youth had trouble overcoming. It was difficult for youth to connect with the hip-hop dance teacher when he brought up conversations around the authenticity of current mainstream or modern-day hip-hop music. I connect this barrier to what I refer to as **"generationalism."** Generationalism is where specific activities that youth engage in, like the type of music they listen to, are considered negative as a result of it not being the same type of activity that another generation engaged in.

I argue that generationalism is different from the concept of adultism¹³ because it places a focus on specific recreational activities like listening to hip-hop music. When we apply the concept of generationalism to the attitudes Keith held towards the music youth listen to, issues about the authenticity of hip-hop come into play. While discussions around authenticity are considered important forms of dialogue, youth voices must be at the center of these discussions in order to combat generationalism.

Based on my field notes entry above, it is clear that the hip-hop dance teacher made the decision that the music youth participants identified with was not hip-hop, but

¹³ Adultism refers to "behaviors and attitudes based on the assumption that adults are better than young people, and entitled to act upon young people without their agreement. This mistreatment is reinforced by social institutions, laws, customs, and attitudes (Bell, 1995).

if we define hip-hop culture as a tool to address sociopolitical issues for marginalized youth then some of the current mainstream hip-hop music that plays on the radio is in fact hip-hop. Hip-hop education courses should provide a space to critique modern-day hip-hop culture and celebrate the historical and contemporary elements of the culture. The radical healing process' component of culture includes the importance of celebrating Black youth culture (Ginwright, 2010a). In order to provide the space for youth to celebrate their culture, hip-hop education teachers have to move past their biases and generationalist attitudes.

One way that adults can combat generationalist attitudes in hip-hop education is to incorporate current mainstream hip-hop artists into the discussion and dialogue. For example, one mainstream hip-hop artist, Kendrick Lamar, is known for blatantly addressing sociopolitical issues like the war on drugs, police brutality, and poverty through his art form. Lamar's popular 2015 song "Alright" openly addresses the importance of collective healing for Black people through his expression of the lyrics like "*We gon' be alright! Do you hear me? Do you feel me? We gon' be alright!*" (Lamar, 2015).

In contrast, hip-hop artists like Bobby \$hmurda who force listeners to think critically about the environment many Black youth live in through his popular 2014 song "Hot Nigga" which boast lyrics about "*everybody catching bullet holes*" (\$hmurda, 2014). A deeper analysis of this song would shed light on the issues surrounding the ways in which violence occurs in \$hmurda's community. While \$hmurda's critique of sociopolitical issues are not blatant like Lamar's, his lyrics can still be used to develop

critical thinking skills in youth participants. Completely dismissing the art that comes out of mainstream hip-hop music like what is produced by Lamar and \$hmurda is a missed opportunity for youth to connect their lived experiences through the culture they identify with, hip-hop culture, to the structural forces that effect their development. Moving past biases based on the culture that an adult hip-hop education teacher may identify with is integral to the application of the CHHP framework.

Highlighting the lived experiences of Black youth today should be central in hip-hop education classrooms as one of the fundamental elements of the CHHP framework because it insists that the conditions and experiences of youth of color should be at the center of classroom activities. Not incorporating youth voice and dismissing elements of the culture that youth identify with fails to achieve what Ginwright (2010a) refers to as a celebration of Black youth culture. I argue that if youth were given opportunities to voice their critiques and opinions about current hip-hop culture along with Keith, the disruptions to positive cultural identity development may not have occurred.

Summary/Conclusion

This chapter 1) provided an overview of the CHHP pedagogy, 2) gave a descriptions of the two hip-hop education courses taught at the SAAC program, 3) described the tools hip-hop education teachers applied to promote cultural identity development, and 4) provided an insight into the processes that disrupt cultural identity development. As one of the four areas of radical healing, positive cultural identity development is integral to the facilitation of healing for Black youth. The hip-hop

education dance classes provided examples of how cultural identity development can be successfully fostered using the CHHP principles of liberation: (1) critical pedagogy, (2) self-determination, and (3) agency. Connecting the CHHP framework to the ways in which the field of youth development approaches culture and cultural identity for Black youth is important in moving towards understanding youth cultural identity development through the lens of SJYD.

Due to the history of the problem/prevention, PYD, and SJYD frameworks that address culture and cultural identity development for youth of color, youth development researchers and practitioners have a responsibility to ensure that critical frameworks like CHHP are applied to both research and practice. The data from this case study provides insight on how facilitating a space for Black youth to develop positive cultural identity is both rewarding and challenging. While elimination of disruptions to cultural identity development is ideal, not every hip-hop education class will be successful in implementing CHHP. As a result, practitioner and researchers should focus on using critical pedagogy to facilitate self-determination to promote agency among youth of color and consistently make attempts to learn from the disruptions. I have hopes that the results of this case study shed light on the importance of using the SJYD and CHHP frameworks to facilitate positive cultural identity for Black youth.

CHAPTER VI

EXPERIENCING TRAUMA AND REFRAMING HEALING

Well, absolutely the children bring their issues to the center, you know every single summer. And we see that as a positive. You know, we want them to know that this is a place where their voice is heard and many of the things that we're doing is just helping them to understand how to channel that frustration, that upset, you know that fear, whatever it is, into a creative outlet.

- Vicki, SDCC Program Manager

Introduction

This chapter will apply the SJYD framework and the radical healing process to the lived experiences of two youth participants in the SAAC program to explore their experiences of trauma and the beginning of the healing process. Through the use of vignettes, I will deconstruct, critique, and reframe our understanding of healing within the field of youth development by applying the art of performance as a site of resistance for Black youth. This case study attempted to identify what elements of a community-based SJYD program facilitate the radical healing process. Radical healing is the process of "building the capacity of young people to act upon their environment in ways that contribute to the common good" (Ginwright, 2010a, p. 8). Not only do the results of this case study provide an insight on the ways in which the radical healing process is facilitated through the SAAC program, it also highlights how healing is a never ending process for Black youth and their communities.

According to Ginwright (2010a),

Radical healing is much broader than simply moving from pathology to wellness. The concept focuses on how hope, imagination, and care transform the capacity of communities to confront community problems. For young people, healing

fosters a collective optimism and a transformation of spirit that, over time, contributes to healthy, vibrant community life (p. 11).

While individual, community, and social wellness are outcomes of the radical healing process in the radical healing model, the data from this case study both support and refute what Ginwright (2010a) describes above. Based on Ginwright's (2010a) description of the radical healing process, youth interviewed for this case study were experiencing radical healing because they reported the existence of the four components of the radical healing process (*care, community, critical consciousness, and culture*) in their lives. However, some of the Black youth that attended the SAAC program, like Blue and Egypt, did not complete a healing to achieve wellness through the linear process Ginwright (2010a) displays in the radical healing model.

This case study showed that the existence of a space of refuge, like the SDCC, facilitates radical healing for youth. However, when they leave the space they experience trauma from the structural and interpersonal social toxins¹⁴ described in the radical healing model. In the same way that the social toxins exist on both the structural and interpersonal levels, the trauma youth experience occurs at both the community and individual level where the individual level would be based on personal experiences and the community level would be based on social, political, and economic experiences. Conceptualizing trauma through the lens of the radical healing model requires an acknowledgement that the existence of trauma on both the individual and community level creates a collective trauma that connects Black youth through their lived

¹⁴ See Chapter I for more information on the structural and interpersonal social toxins in the radical healing model.

experiences (Ginwright, 2010a). It is this connection that makes the radical healing process a collective process.

The trauma that stems from the structural and interpersonal social toxins in the radical healing model could be considered what Paivio and Pascual-Leone (2010) refer to as complex trauma that is developmental or relationship based. This form of trauma is defined as “repeated exposure to threat of violence, including social and political violence through war or torture, domestic violence (as victim or witness), and childhood abuse” (Paivio & Pascual-Leon, 2010, p. 15). One critical feature of complex trauma is the repeated exposure that occurs across a young person’s development. The data from this case study showed that the existence of oppressive forces in the lives of Black youth as repeated exposure to violence. This repeated exposure hinders Black youth’s healthy development into adulthood. Connecting trauma to oppression for Black youth involves an adoption of the SJYD framework and the radical healing model. Applying this framework and model “requires that we conceptualize oppression as a form of social and collective trauma. This view of oppression allows us to identity the cultural, social, and spiritual consequences of trauma for oppressed communities” (Ginwright, 2010a, p. 9).

Poetic Performance as Radical Healing

Poetry is used in the SAAC program as a form of artistic expression and as I conducted participant-observations during the poetry class I discovered that youth participants used poetry to express their emotions and reflect on past experiences. During each class meeting I wrote my own poetry along with the youth participants and

through this process or performance I learned a great deal about the lived experiences of the youth in the program. Kijana, the poetry teacher for the class, asked each of us to perform our poems aloud and everyone in the room provide a critique to help us improve on our poetry writing skills. Many of the youth excelled at the art of writing poetry and when Kijana would give us a writing topic, they would produce a poem in around 10 minutes. However, there was one young person, Blue, who loved the art of writing poetry but did not like reading his poems out loud. This section will present how the performance of Blue writing the poem below serves as a critical example of how the SAAC program employ artistic expression and performance as a tool to resist oppressive forces and facilitate healing for Black youth in the program.

Vignette 1: Blue's Story

I Come From

By: Blue

*I come from challenge
Mama's gone, I'm alone to deal with boyfriend.*

*I come from hospitals and foster families
Being adopted by my granny.*

*I come from nice, loving, kindness
Of a woman who loves to give.*

*I come from Irving loneliness
Then Zach and Logan changed all of that.
More friends, more fun.*

I come from transition and change.

*I come from Mama's Mama
My own room but mama changed that.
Siblings- but I was still spoiled*

*I come from bullying, name-calling
"You white," "you proper," everything but
Who I really am*

*I come from movement
And I was happy
New school great before the merge
Choir, teacher, principals
Feeling comfortable to be my own person
And able to take on responsibilities*

*I come from chicken salad, takis, blue bell ice cream, and peach soda;
Smothered pork chops and granny's fried chicken.*

*I come from early mornings
Eggs, sausage, and sometimes bacon*

*I come from Papa's guidance,
And barbecue coated clothes.*

*I come from new experiences
The South Dallas Cultural Center
Mr. Harold, Ms. Meek, Ms. K*

*I come from dreams
To be a professional play writer
And applause in my own theater.*

I come from challenge, transition, new experiences, and dreams.

The Love for Poetry

Blue had just finished his last year at Dade Middle School as an eighth grader before he came to the SAAC program. Due to the fact that this was his first year at the SAAC program, he was not sure what to expect on the first day, but he was excited about having an entire class dedicated to theater. Throughout the first week of the program Blue would come up to me and ask to see the program schedule of activities I always kept inside my site observation journal. I would pull out the piece of paper and turn to the back of the page where the schedule of activities for the teen group was listed. Blue would say, "Awww man, we only have theater once a week? How come we don't have it twice a week like our poetry and hip-hop dance class?" I told Blue that I did not make the schedule and asked if he really liked theater. Blue responded, "I love

theater.” I then told Blue that I was so glad he was in the program and I hope he enjoys the theater class.

One thing that I learned about Blue was his love for theater and how he was looking forward to his freshman year at James Madison High School where he planned to help create their theater program.

"Cause like I really love theater, and like I'm going to a school that don't have no theater [program], and I have a lot of friends who going, who like really love theater and passion with theater and that's what inspired me to do it. I like acting theater, but like I'm not like a actor, but I like I know how to coach 'em doing lil bit. Then I like I love behind scenes theater. Tech [technical theater]."

Although Blue loved theater, he also loved writing poetry but I noticed that it would always take him longer than the rest of the youth to write a poem. On most days of the poetry class, I observed Blue not writing anything at all. Kijana addressed this by instructing Blue to write the poems she assigned when he got home, like they were homework. She would ask Blue to bring the completed poems to the next class meeting and Blue would always agree to work on his poetry at home. However, during the next class meeting Blue would never have any of his completed poetry. When Kijana would ask Blue if he worked on any of the poems at home, he would simply tell her, "I don't have it."

The Poetry Writing Session

During the next poetry class meeting Kijana asked each of us to write a poem that would be titled "Where I'm From." She asked everyone in the class to think about how we would poetically respond if someone asked us to describe where we were from and where we have been. Kijana then shared her very own "Where I Come From" poem by reading it out loud to the class. The youth participants and I affirmed Kijana and told her that we loved her poem. She then asked us to write our own "Where I Come From" poem. Kijana encouraged us to be creative in our writing but begin each stanza with the phrase, "I come from." Once everyone got started on their "I Come From" poems, I noticed that Kijana had Blue pull up his chair next to her at a table in the room. I was focused on writing my own "Where I Come From" poem but every now and then I would pop my head up and see Kijana asking Blue questions. After Blue answered, she would write his responses down on the white square-shaped paper on the table in front of them. Kijana and Blue sat at that table for at least thirty minutes talking and writing. Once they finished she asked if anyone wanted to go to the front of the room and read their poem aloud.

Nearly all of the youth volunteered and at least half of them were given an opportunity to read their poems aloud. At one point Kijana looked at Blue and

asked if he wanted to read his poem out loud. Blue told her that he did not want to but she could read it out loud. Kijana then stood up from her chair and read Blue's poem to everyone in the room and after she finished reading, she said, "Isn't that good y'all?" We all agreed that it was a great poem and congratulated Blue on finally being able to finish a poem during class. Kijana then dismissed the youth for lunch and as everyone was packing up their things to head to lunch I walked over to Blue and Kijana. I looked at Blue and said, "I really loved your poem. You did such a great job." Blue thanked me and said, "That's the best poem I've ever written." He then looked at Kijana and thanked her for helping him write the poem. I asked Blue if it would be okay to use his poem for the case study research I was conducting at the program and he proudly agreed and told me that I could take a picture of the poem if I wanted. I thanked him and used my cell phone to take a picture and then Blue headed to lunch.

The Discovery of Trauma

I stayed after class to speak with Kijana about Blue's poem and told her how surprised I was that he had finally written and completed a poem during class. She said that he did a great job but while she helped him write the poem, she found out that Blue had a great deal of trouble reading and writing. Harold, the SDCC assistant manager, then came in the room and Kijana told him that she was glad he stopped by because she had something to share with him. Kijana handed Harold Blue's poem and asked him to read it. Harold read it and said, "This is pretty good. Whose poem is this?" I told him that it was Blue's poem. Kijana added that she basically wrote the words for him by asking him to talk about his experiences and they constructed the lines of the poem based on his responses. Kijana then shared with Harold that she was really concerned for Blue because he could hardly read or write the lines of the poem as they worked on it together. She told Harold and I that Blue was about to be a freshman in high school and he may be reading on a second or third grade reading level. Harold then said that he needed to let Ms. Isaac know so she could test him for dyslexia and get the help he needed.¹⁵

Later on that day after lunch time I was sitting on a bench near the front desk of the SDCC writing up my field notes when Blue walked up to me. He wanted to know what I was writing about and I told him that I was just writing down some things that happened earlier in the day so I could remember them. Blue wanted to know if I was writing about poetry class and I shared with him that the poetry class was one of many things I was writing down. I also shared with Blue that I really loved his poem and I thanked him for sharing it with me and

¹⁵ Blue was tested for dyslexia during the time this case study was conducted but due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines, the results of his test were only shared with his parent/guardian and the local high school he was going to attend after the summer was over.

allowing me to use it for the case study. Blue then said, *"I don't like to talk about it because I didn't want to remember it but now I feel comfortable talking about it."* I told Blue that I was glad that he felt comfortable talking about it and sometimes talking about the bad things helps us get better. Harold then walked by and asked Blue to go with him to put a movie on in the theater for the first and second grade group. Blue followed Harold and I didn't get to finish talking with Blue about his poem that day but I made a note to discuss it with him during his interview.

This conversation with Blue highlighted the ways in which youth speak about their trauma. When Blue uses the word "it" he is referring to the following lines of his "Where I Come From" poem:

*I come from challenge
Mama's gone, I'm alone to deal with boyfriend.
I come from hospitals and foster families
Being adopted by my granny.*

Based on these four lines I was not truly able to articulate what type of trauma happened to Blue. My fixation on the type of trauma quickly stopped after Blue told me that he now he feels comfortable talking about it. I wanted to know what caused him to get to a point where he was comfortable talking about his trauma and I attempted to ask him to expand on this during his interview.

The Interview

I interviewed Blue on the fourth week of the program in the computer lab of the SDCC. It was a one-on-one interview but the door of the computer lab remained open because SDCC staff needed to use the copy machine that was located in the room. During my interview with Blue he shared with me that he liked the poetry class. When I asked Blue what made him like the poetry class he responded, *"Ummm. I like writing the poems. I don't like reading them out loud. I like to write 'em. It take me time to write 'em, but I'll write 'em."* I then asked Blue the question, *"Ummm..."Where I Come From," that was a really good poem. Do you wanna talk to me about that one?"* and Blue responded:

Yeah. I started off like start off how where I come from like. My mom going to work, and I have to stay at home with her boyfriend while he was doing stuff to me had me in like tub of hot water burning me and stuff then when my teacher found out, like saw a bandaid sticking out the side of my pants then I went to the nurse, then they took—took me to Children's [hospital], and they did some, then I had had surgery and stuff. Then I went to a foster family for like two or three weeks. Then my Granny Betty like kinda adopt me out of it...And sometimes I don't like to talk about it, 'cause it kinda like I get scared sometimes about it. 'Cause

now I'm kinda getting used to it, 'cause like I don't wanna keep it, hold it in. I wanna like kinda break it out. So, it kinda been easy cause I write stories at school. We have to like write about like hard times in your lives and I been writin' bout that mostly... 'Cause like you could, you have to like put it out you know? You could just like break it down easier... 'Cause like one of my teachers, 'cause like one day we had to write about it, and I started writing about it and I started crying, 'cause like I didn't wanna write about it, 'cause like it's real sad, then she just said, "You don't have to write about. You can just tell me what happened, and we could like get you some help, like so you won't like remember it and then you start crying, and like I had a counselor for that 'fore I moved to Dallas with my Mama, and it was working. I used have a like a counselor used to come like, like once a month to my granny house.

Blue's response to my question provided insight on his lived traumatic experience. When I asked Blue how long it had been since this experience happened, he told me that it occurred a long time ago when he was really little.

I realized that Blue had not talked about the abuse he endured from his mother's former boyfriend for a while but felt comfortable to write about in a poem during the SAAC program. Blue had discovered a safe space of refuge where he felt comfortable releasing the trauma he went through as a child. The performance of writing poetry helped Blue revisit his trauma in a way that helped him begin the healing process again. This sheds light on the importance of reexamining the ways in which we talk about trauma and healing in the fields of youth and adolescent development.

Reexamining Trauma and Radical Healing through Blue's Eyes

This section will discuss Blue's lived experiences of 1) abuse from his mother's former boyfriend, 2) entrance into foster care for a brief period, 3) removal of counseling services from his life, and 4) having to go to navigate a school system that refuses to recognize or care for his possible learning disability as exposure to oppressive forces that hinder his healthy development into adulthood and create complex trauma in his life. Terr (2003) defines childhood trauma as "the mental result of one sudden, external blow or a series of blows, rendering the young person temporarily helpless and breaking past

ordinary coping and defensive operations" (p. 11). This definition applies to Blue's experiences of being burned by his mother's former boyfriend and serves as a traditional way to conceptualize trauma of children and youth. While most people would use this definition to describe the abuse Blue endured from his mother's former boyfriend, I argue that his entrance into the foster care system, lack of access to counseling, and failure on the school system for allowing his learning disability to go undiagnosed created a more complex trauma for Blue due to the series of events after the initial trauma occurred and serves as forms of repeated exposure (Paivio & Pascual-Leon, 2010).

Complex Trauma: Entrance into Foster Care System

When youth, like Blue, experience abuse that is then reported to government institutions like the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) they often endure more trauma. Although there are not many research studies examining experiences of complex trauma after foster care placement, Riebschleger, et al. (2015) investigated the stories of 43 Michigan foster care youth. These authors found that many traumas can occur, "First, trauma took place before, during, and following placement. Second, trauma experiences were chronic; that is, they were comprised of events and situations that were intense, composite, and cumulative." (Riebschlger, et al., 2015, p. 345). The repeated exposure to traumatic experiences upon entrance into the foster care system is considered complex trauma. While youth in the Riebschleger, et al. (2015) study experienced trauma before, during, and after placement in foster care, I will focus on the trauma experienced during foster care to shed light on how Blue's entrance into

foster care for just a short period of time added to his complex trauma and its relationship to healing.

Riebschleger, et al. (2015) write that “the impact of moving to different homes and schools made them [foster youth] feel worse, particularly if they were separated from their siblings” (p. 349). Although Blue was an only child at the time he was placed into foster care, he was removed from his mother, an adult he had an attachment to, due to abuse from her former boyfriend. Based on Riebschleger, et al.’s (2015) study, the removal of Blue from his mother and into a foster home for a couple of weeks could be considered another traumatic experience. Instead of placing Blue in foster care for three weeks, Texas DFPS could have placed him with his grandmother when the abuse was first reported.

Federal law does not require, but encourages, entities like Texas DFPS to automatically give preference to an adult relative, like a grandmother, when determining placement of a child whose investigation results in a removal from their home (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013). By moving Blue to foster care before moving him to live with his grandmother, Texas DFPS added to his complex trauma. Based on Blue’s lived experiences, I argue that the foster care system is not always truly focused on protecting youth from trauma. When a young person is forced to navigate systems that are created to protect them and these systems intentionally or unintentionally cause trauma in a young person’s life it speaks to the ways in which this system can be labeled as oppressive.

When we apply SJYD to contextualize Blue's lived experiences around trauma, we must acknowledge the ways in which oppressive systems hinder the ability for youth to have a healthy development into adulthood. Although Blue doesn't name his abuse and entrance into the foster care system as trauma, his expression of not wanting to talk about it because of a sense of fear reflects how he views it as a traumatic experience. Acknowledging that Blue's trauma is complex because he 1) experienced abuse from his mother's former boyfriend and 2) experienced trauma when he entered into the foster care system forces us to reexamine how we understand and define trauma in the lives of young people who have to navigate oppressive systems.

Complex Trauma: Lack of Access to Counseling

When Blue mentioned that he wrote about his abuse in a story at school and his teacher reacted by calling in a counselor, it shows signs that Blue began the healing process before entering the SAAC program. However, Blue also mentioned that he was no longer given counseling when he moved away from his grandmother's house in Irving to go live with his mother and siblings in South Dallas. I consider the removal of Blue's access to counseling as another exposure to trauma, making this experience complex trauma.

According to Burns, et al. (2004), one of the largest gaps between the need of youth who have entered into child welfare systems, like foster care, but were returned back home is mental health services. Burns, et al. (2004) write, "The multiple insults of maltreatment, family risk factors, frequent placement changes for many youth, and severed emotional and behavioral problems underscore a critical need for clinical

attention to this special population” (p.968). Based on this information I argue that Blue’s lack of access to counseling after moving back with his mother is one example of how important clinical services, like counseling, are to youth that navigate or come into contact with the foster care system.

SJYD considers healing as an outcome to building the different levels of awareness. SJYD speaks to the idea that the removal of counseling from Blue’s life is another exposure to trauma because it hindered his healing process. When Blue moved back to South Dallas and entered into the education institution of Dade Middle School, there was a failure to provide counseling services to him even though he had been in contact with the foster care system and experienced abuse from his mother’s former boyfriend. The disruption to Blue’s healing process and lack of access to counseling when he arrived at Dade Middle School is another way that systems like the education system fail to facilitate healing for youth who have experienced trauma.

Complex Trauma: Failure on the School System to Diagnose Dyslexia

Although Blue expressed a desire to write poetry, he struggled to write anything during the poetry class. The fact that Blue was about to enter the ninth grade but had a significant amount of trouble reading and writing illuminates how the local school system, Dallas Independent School District (DISD), failed to recognize Blue’s possible learning disability. The portion of Blues’ story related to the failure on the school system to diagnose his possible dyslexia adds to the body of research on the inhumane and oppressive nature of school systems in the lives of many young Black boys.

Howard (2013), provides support to this argument when he writes,

Although reading scores for Black males in Grades 4 and 8 have increased over the past decade, they still trail behind White, Latino, and Asian males, and a large majority fall short of grade-level proficiency...In many large urban districts across the country, the reading achievement scores for eighth-grade Black males are consistent with the reading scores for fourth-grade Asian American and White males (p. 60).

Black boys are disproportionately affected by the conditions they endure while attending school and this makes it difficult to achieve success in life (Anderson, 2008). Blue's possible learning disability not being diagnosed is connected to the barriers many Black boys face navigating oppressive school systems and I attribute it to his complex trauma.

Blue's lived experiences of 1) abuse from his mother's former boyfriend, 2) entrance into foster care for a brief period, 3) removal of counseling services from his life, and 4) having to go to navigate a school system that refuses to recognize or care for his possible learning disability are all considered exposure to oppressive forces that hinder a healthy development into adulthood and create complex trauma. Systems like the Texas DFPS, foster care system, and school system fail to protect Blue from experiencing trauma. In addition to not providing protection to Blue, they also perpetuate and add to the complex trauma he is already dealing with.

Trauma is more than just a form of physical abuse, it can take on a number of forms and the SJYD framework and radical healing model assist in understanding how to think about a young person's trauma in order to facilitate healing. As opposed to viewing trauma as something a young person needs to have treated by removing it, the SJYD framework and radical healing model asserts that a young person's trauma is a part of their lived experiences. The opportunity to have a safe space to openly discuss and express their trauma is what leads to the facilitation of the radical healing process

(Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright, 2010a). Blue's poem, "Where I Come From" is one of many ways that artistic expression and performance is used to help youth work against internalizing the trauma they experience and can lead to healing.

Radical Healing: Performance as a Site for Healing and Resistance

I consider the act of Blue writing his "Where I Come From" poem with Kijana as performance that facilitated the beginning of the healing process. I use the term performance here to refer to what Conquergood (1991) conceives as the politics of performance. The politics of performance questions the relationship between performance and power and I argue that Blue's poetic performance names the oppressive power structures that created his complex trauma. According to Ginwright, "The power to speak about painful experiences related to racism, sexism, and poverty facilitates healing because the act of testifying exposes the raw truth about suffering and releases the hidden pain that is a profound barrier to resistance" (2010a, p. 9).

In order to deconstruct Blue's poetic performance, I bind hook's (1995) conceptualization of Black performance to Ginwright's (2010a) proposition of exposing the pain of oppression to remove barriers to resistance. Blue's poetic performance exposes his trauma and through the performance of writing the poem and naming his trauma; he began to release his pain. This initial release of pain brought Blue to a space where he used the power of words to resist the oppressive world around him and heal. According to hooks (1995), one component of the art of performance is to manipulate out of the necessity of the need to survive in an oppressive world. hook's (1995) conceptualization of performance centers Black performance as a historic and current

site of resistance. The fact that Blue has a learning disability that makes it difficult for him to construct written poetry without the help of the system that is supposed to give him the tools to overcome this disability, illuminates Blue's ability to resist the oppressive forces. It is through the process of Blue's poetic performance that he exposes the raw truth of the oppressive education system.

While Blue began the healing process when he constructed poetic performance as a site of resistance, I recognize that he was not fully healed because he will continue to endure the oppressive forces upon his entrance back into school after the summer is over. While Blue has the SAAC program as a space of refuge during the summer that allots him opportunities to construct performance as a site of healing and resistance, he still has to return back to spaces like the education system that failed to diagnose his learning disability. One could argue that Blue's healing process is ongoing and will continue as long as he has a space of refuge to openly discuss and express the trauma. While spaces of refuge facilitate healing processes for many youth and their families, what happens when the trauma youth experience comes from the existence of racialized gendered oppression? The next section will explore the answer to this question and discuss the importance of defining healing as a continuous process that does not end until systemic oppression ends.

Dancing Through Trauma as Radical Healing

On the very first day of conducting this case study I realized that the lived experiences of youth in the program go far beyond the walls of the SDCC. The quote

that opens this chapter sheds light on the ways in which these lived experiences are accepted into the SAAC program. This section will offer a vignette exploring an incident that happened during the summer this case study was conducted. I will examine how one discussion about hyper masculinity and misogyny in hip-hop music and culture became connected to a traumatic experience one young women enrolled in the SAAC program encountered. I will then provide an analysis of the ways in which systems of oppression are linked to traumatic lived experiences and examine how performance became a site where resistance and healing took place.

Vignette 2: Egypt's Story

The Discussion

The youth in the teen group watched the film *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes* (Hurt, 2006) one day during program activities. This film deconstructs masculinity within hip-hop music and culture and includes interviews from hip-hop culture scholars, artists, and journalist (Hurt, 2006). Before the film started Ms. Clark asked the youth if they could answer the questions that she had prepared to ask them after the film. One of the questions was, “who is Afrika Bambaata?” They were able to answer who he was and could even explain the story behind his name. Then Ms. Clark asked the youth, “what does Bambaata mean?” The youth could not answer. She told them that it was okay that they did not know the answer to that question because they knew who Afrika Bambaata was. She told them that they would discuss all of the questions she prepared after they finished the film. Once of the film began the youth noticed that a famous black actor, Terrence Howard, was introducing the film. Oumar said, “*That’s the guy from Empire.*” *Empire* (Daniels, et al., 2015) is a popular television show that features Terrence Howard. All of the youth agreed that it was Terrence Howard and they continued to watch the film. At the beginning of the film many of the youth were engaged but as it progressed some of them began to pull out their cell phones, tablets, and even a crossword puzzle book. Egypt, Justice, and Blue were the only three youth that faced the television and diligently watched the entire film. There were specific times during the film however, when the other youth in the room would pop their heads up from their phones or tablets.

One scene in particular got the attention of all the youth in the room. This portion of the film displays footage the filmmaker, Byron Hurt, took while visiting Spring Bling, a former Black Entertainment Television (BET) hosted event in

Daytona Beach, Florida one year during Spring Break. Hurt recorded video of the interactions between the young men and women and discussed the ways in which the young men would video record these young women walking in bikinis and even grab their bodies, specifically their breast and their butt cheeks, as they walked along the beach, in the mall, or at parties. This portion of the film set out to address the ways in which women are objectified and experience unwanted touch of their bodies from men. The film goes on to present interviews with famous rappers, journalist, and scholars providing their commentary on the culture of hip-hop and its connection to a larger rape culture that exist throughout nearly every entity of popular culture in the U.S.

Once the film ended Ms. Clark turned on the lights and asked the youth what they thought about the film. Egypt quickly raised her hand and was eager to be the first to answer the question. She told Ms. Clark,

...Spelman was right for doing that to Nelly. You know Nelly is a good rapper I guess but the thing is what they doing to us women and making us seem like that's what we are. Half of us not like that and sometime women they do dress like that. That's what they are but you can be, like basically they can call us classy if we want to dress fully but wearing our body out and stuff like that. That's not right.

Egypt's response illuminates the ways in which the film pushed her to think about the representations of women in hip-hop. When she mentions the response that the women at Spelman College had to a popular rapper named Nelly she is referring to an incident that happened at Spelman College in 2004 featured in the film¹⁶. Ms. Clark then asked Me, another youth participant, to discuss the film and he stated,

I think it was like, the things that they're talking about now in hip-hop are the things that some of them are fake and not the truth because some of them like don't even go through struggles.

It was then Bug's turn and she said,

I understand that it's wrong to call girls bitches and hoes and stuff like that but somebody had to learn it from somebody. It's just not this generations fault. I'm not saying it's the rappers fault cause they looked

¹⁶ Nelly was planning to hold a bone marrow drive at Spelman College when the women that attend the college protested the bone marrow drive in response to a popular music video that Nelly had recently released called Tip Drill (2003). This music video displays images of women wearing bikinis and dancing around a pool. One of the most controversial scenes of the video is when rapper Nelly takes a credit card out of his wallet and slides it between the butt cheeks of one of the women in the video. This music video was banned from nearly all music video television shows with the exception of BET's Uncut television show. The women at Spelman College agreed to not protest the bone marrow drive if Nelly came to a town hall discussion on campus to address the music video but Nelly did not attend the discussion.

up to somebody. And for girls, it's totally not their fault because that's how they present themselves. That's what they wear and how they let men treat them. I mean nobody be calling nobody bitches and hoes if the girl don't walk up here, don't walk up and down the street half naked. I mean so they can't be mad. Them women can't be mad at the men for doing, saying and doing all that stuff they basically walking up and down the street half naked. I know it's summer but come on now. You ain't gotta.

Ms. Clark responded, “now in the movie they were not walking up and down the street half naked, they was at parties and at the pool.” Bug reacted by saying, “They was walking down the street half naked in bikinis. They was at the mall Ms. Clark. They weren't at the beach, they were at the mall.” Ms. Clark then asked Bug, “So if women did not walk around like that, they wouldn't be called bitches and hoes?” Bug responded, “Yep.”

Justice mentioned what he thought of the film and stated, “majority of what men want is power.” When it was Oumar's turn he said,
I'm gonna be truthful. I wasn't really watching it but I saw the highlights. I thought it told the truth about what hip-hop was and how it is now. It took it to another level like the girls are more nasty with the way they dance and how they act and how they present themselves. Boys too in how they sag and stuff.

Ms. Clark then went through some terms that were mentioned in the film like homophobia and sexism and the youth were able to define these terms. Ms. Clark told the youth that one of the most critical issues is the importance of understanding who writes hip-hop music and who controls hip-hop music. Oumar responded, “the white man” and Ms. Clark asked him, “why is it that he controls the music?” Oumar explained that “they” take control over the artist and when artist sign contracts, it is like they are selling their soul to the devil. He mentioned that “the white man” writes all their lyrics and controls the music and while they are doing that the artist are losing their culture and talent. Bug chimed in and stated,

I understand but I kind of disagree with that because I understand that he's saying the white man has power, yes I understand that. Yea I agree with that also but I don't agree with why the white man, what he was saying. I'm just saying that they the one who got the money and give it to the artist. They own the big businesses and they the one who just taking charge of just getting all of this.

Ms. Clark then thanked Bug for her input and said,
I hope that this gives you a greater understanding that as an artist, if someone offers you a contract for your talent, for your genius, it's very hard to refuse. Right? Because we all like money, right? And so the issue

gets to be, how can I refuse the money and keep my integrity and be an artist. That's the issue and that's the thing that you have to solve for us. Cause all of you have talent and if someone came in here right now and said, 'we're going to put you on television and millions of people are going to see your beautiful face and hear your brilliant lyrics you've written and we might give you a little money.' And we know you're struggling at home and even if you're not struggling at home, we've taught you that money is the true test of success. Get that money and you are successful and what we see is those people with money are not necessarily successful. They're just richer slaves. They don't control anything and he just told us back there. So we don't have control and we have to figure out and that's what we're here to do. We have to figure out how to use our talent, maintain control of it, share it, and share in the wealth that it generates and at the same time not denigrate who we are. Cause a lot of times we go, for me to go to church like this back in the day, this would have been provocative cause I'm showing my arms or to wear a t-strap, a spaghetti strap. "Oh my God, what kind of floozy is the word they used back in my day." And I was actually called that and I didn't think there was nothing wrong with this but it's so, it gets to be maybe I might wear this but who I am. I am not what I wear.

Ms. Clark then looked at me and said, "Ms. Aishia do you have something that you want to say?" I responded to the youth and Ms. Clark and said,

I think that y'all are great engaging in dialogue about this. This is what some of my research is on and the way you all understand these types of videos and so I'm seeing, I'm seeing that you all have great critiques of hip-hop but there's also some things that seem to be misunderstood. Like this idea that because a women dresses in a certain way then she deserves to be treated in a certain way, right? So maybe we need to deconstruct that a little bit and kind of think about what that means. Because you're dressed a certain way, then you should be treated a certain way is, you know, is that accurate? Is that right? So maybe we need to think about that a little more and what that means because like Ms. Clark said back in the day what she was wearing, it was seen exactly the same way that what the women on there were viewed as, right? So does that mean that they are supposed to be treated as less human?

Bug then said,

But I got a question for you. Now, would your mama let you walk out the house like that and then not say nothing about it? Knowing that you was showing too much? You need to have respect for yourself. You don't have respect for yourself wearing that and expect a man to have respect for you.

I responded to Bug and stated,

So that means that you are now an object that they can touch because you're dressed in that way? That's my problem, that's my issue is that I'm not an object that you can touch just because I'm wearing clothing in this way because my body belongs to me. Right? So that's kind of what I think about when I see this video. So while you all do have good points about this idea that you do need to respect yourself but that does not mean that my body is something that you own just because I'm dressed in this way and so you don't own me therefore you should not be able to touch me.

Bug then said, *"I understand."*

Ms. Clark dismissed the teen group to get ready for lunch but afterwards Egypt walked up to me and wanted to talk about what I just shared with the group before Ms. Clark dismissed them. I put my arm around her and said, *"what's up?"* Egypt told me that she learned a lot today and that she got what I was saying. She then went on to say that it did not make any sense that just because someone is wearing a certain type of clothing, they should be touched in a way that they don't want to be touched. I then told Egypt that I understood where each of them were coming from in regards to dressing in a way that you are respecting yourself but my focus is on consent and the fact that you should not touch anyone without your consent. Egypt agreed and said she understood and she gave me a hug and joined the rest of her group as they got ready to prepare for lunch. I reflected on this interaction with the youth and Ms. Clark in my field notes that day after program activities had ended.

The youth seemed to focus on the issue of dress instead of bigger issues in the film like the whole discussion on what manhood means in hip-hop and how problematic it is. It seemed that all they got from the film is that the women shouldn't dress in that way. I'm learning that the discussions, the dialogue is powerful. We can't just put a film on and not discuss it. We can't just put a film on and not truly critique it and analyze it. That's dangerous.

The Trauma

This morning Ms. Vicki told me that she just got some disturbing news. Egypt was in the hospital last night. After her and her siblings got home, there was someone that beat her up. She noticed some boys outside her house fighting and she went outside to tell them to stop and get from in front of her house. Their father came out and beat her up and she had to go to the hospital. Ms. Vicki told me that she would be contacting the City Council because the police did not file a police report when they were called out to Egypt's house after the incident...I'm really bothered by the

fact that Egypt is taught here to use her voice and speak up to make changes in her community but when she attempts to intervene on violence and protect her space, she is physically abused by a community member and there is no justice because the police refused to do an investigation. Sadness, sadness. My heart is heavy about this. I'm feeling so defeated."

- Field Notes Day 18

The day I engaged in a discussion with the youth in the teen group and Ms. Clark about their thoughts on the film *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes* (Hurt, 2006) Egypt and her siblings walked home after the program was over and awaited their mother to come home from work. While they were waiting they noticed a group of young boys fighting over a football in the front yard of their house. Egypt, being the oldest, was concerned and went outside to tell the boys to move their fight out of her front yard. The young boys refused to move and began to chastise Egypt. She told them that she did not care what they were fighting about and that they needed to take their fight somewhere else. Then one of the boy's fathers came over and began to argue with Egypt about telling his son what to do. Egypt told the father that they were fighting in her front yard and that she asked them to take their fight somewhere else. The father got angry with Egypt and assaulted her to the point that her siblings had to call for an ambulance to take her to the hospital. As Egypt's mother rushed home to meet the ambulance she saw a police car in the neighborhood and pulled over to speak with the police officer. She told the police officer that her daughter was just assaulted and asked if he could follow her to their house so they could file a police report. The police officer asked Egypt's mother for her address and told her that he would stop by soon. The ambulance came and took Egypt to the hospital and her mother went along but left an adult at the house to await the police officer but the officer never came and a police report was never filed. On the same day Ms. Vicki told me about Egypt's assault I also heard her explaining the incident to Ms. Clark and Harold. She believed that Egypt's assailant probably thought that Egypt was older than what she actually was because she seemed to look like she's a woman and not a young Black girl.

The Healing Process

Egypt and her siblings returned to the SAAC program two days later and it was a much sooner return than what most of the program staff expected. When Egypt walked in to the theatre of the SDCC on the morning she returned to the program, all of the youth in the teen group ran up to her and gave her a group hug. Egypt told them to be gentle because she was still in a lot of pain and her ribs were sore. Since it was close to the end of the five weeks of the program, everyone was getting ready for the final showcase that happens on the evening of the last day of the program. The teen group was set to perform some of their poetry and a choreographed hip-hop dance. Since they had been writing poetry throughout the five weeks, they worked with Kijana to select which ones they

wanted to perform at the final showcase. The hip-hop dance teacher, Keith, expressed that he was not aware of the final showcase and that it would be his job to assist the youth in coming up with the choreography. As a result, the youth had to come together to create their own performance and this is where the healing process began for Egypt.

Although Egypt was in pain and still processing her assault, she worked together with youth participants Oumar and Me to choreograph the teen group's hip-hop dance portion of the final showcase. During the last week of the program when Harold began to do a run through of the final showcase and the teen group did not have any music or a choreographed dance prepared, I noticed that Egypt jumped to action to work on the dance. There were certain dance moves that Oumar and Me suggested and Egypt had to modify them because she was still in pain from her assault but was determined to dance through the pain.

Reexamining Trauma through Egypt's Eyes

In this section I will discuss Egypt's story through the concept of complex trauma, defined earlier in this chapter, to deconstruct the process of 1) internalizing racialized gendered oppression and 2) physically being assaulted as a result of the existence of this form of oppression. Egypt's lived experiences around assault and, what I name as, racialized gendered oppression, provides new insights for the field of youth development. These lived experiences should shift the focus in the field from examining the barriers to development that exist at the individual level to engaging in critical analysis at both the community and institutional levels. Examining the effect racialized gendered oppression has on the development of Black girls, like Egypt, forces us to reexamine the ways in which we define trauma and healing for Black youth.

Complex Trauma: Internalizing Racialized Gendered Oppression

Complex trauma involves repeated exposures to negative events (Paivio & Pascual-Leon, 2010). Based on Blue's experiences of trauma inflicted by oppressive

systems, I argue that complex trauma also includes repeated exposure to oppressive forces. In Egypt's case, complex trauma was exemplified through a form of racialized gendered oppression. I use the term racialized gendered oppression here to refer to the connection between intersecting identities (e.g., being Black and a young woman) and oppression (Collins, 2002). Thomas, et al. (2011), propose that "because individuals are multidimensional, possessing various social identities, the construct of gendered racial identity may better explain the developmental process that occurs for African American girls" (p. 531). Centering Egypt's identity as a Black girl values the importance of recognizing the ways in which her intersecting identities connect to the oppression she endures and the connection that oppression has to her development into adulthood.

Crenshaw (1991) theory on intersectionality argues that intersecting identities are deeply connected to oppressive experiences. I use Crenshaw's (1991) theorizing to name the racialized gendered oppression that Black women and girls endure as complex trauma. Carr, et al. (2014), found that internalizing racialized gendered oppression could lead to depression in Black women and I argue that the mere existence of this form of oppression hinders the positive development of Black girls and causes complex trauma in their lives. The conversation I had with the youth about their perceptions of the Black women in the film, described above, connects to racialized gendered oppression. The attitude that Black women in hip-hop music videos do not respect themselves fails to

consider the existence of what Collins (2002) refers to as ‘controlling images’¹⁷ and their connection to racialized gendered oppression. According to Collins, “Intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, and sexuality could not continue without powerful ideological justifications for their existence (2002, p. 69). While it is important to name the misogyny and sexism that exist in hip-hop music and culture, it is just as significant to connect this misogyny and sexism to the oppressive forces of the mass media that control the images or portrayals of Black women. Collins (2002) argues that these controlling images create intersecting oppressions for Black people, specifically Black women and girls. She goes on to write, “Portraying African-American women as stereotypical mammies, matriarchs, welfare recipients, and hot mommas helps justify U.S. Black women’s oppression” (2002, p. 70).

It was through the dialogue I had with the youth after the film that I realized many of them had internalized these controlling images. Through this internalization, they began to justify why they felt it was acceptable for the women in the film to experience assault. Controlling images remove the power away from Black women and girls to define their own identities (Collins, 2002). Collins (2002) connects historical controlling images, like the mammy and sapphire, to modern day ones like the welfare queen and hoochie. These young people had adopted the controlling image of the “hoochie” (Collins, 2002). This controlling image normalizes heterosexuality in a way where gender roles exist in binaries and dictate appropriate male and female sexual

¹⁷ Controlling images refers to the portrayal of Black women as “stereotypical mammies, matriarchs, welfare recipients, and hot mommas...” (Collins, 2002, p. 63). It is through these images that many people, institutions, and structures justify their oppression of Black people, and specifically Black women.

expression. These binaries are racialized where “White men are active and White women should be passive” (Collins, 2002, p. 83). Due to the fact that Black women do not hold a white identity, they are automatically placed outside of these binaries.

Based on Collins’ (2002) theorizing of controlling images, I argue that the youth’s adoption of the use of the “hoochie” controlling image is rooted in an internalized racialized gendered oppression. I label it as such because 1) the very existence of the controlling image is a form of racialized gendered oppression and 2) when they youth take on the role of accepting the controlling image to be true, they are internalizing it. The “hoochie” controlling image places Black women into a racialized gendered “symbol of deviant female sexuality” (Collins, 2002, p. 83). Collins writes that, “Normal female heterosexuality is expressed via the cult of true White womanhood, whereas deviant female heterosexuality is typified by the “hot mommas” of Black womanhood” (Collins, 2002, p.83).

Although Bug internalized the racialized gendered oppression associated with the “hoochie mama” controlling image, Egypt both internalized and resisted this controlling image. Egypt actively resisted the controlling image of the “hoochie” when she spoke about her feelings around the incident that occurred at Spelman College with rapper Nelly but she also internalized it when she stated, “wearing our body out and stuff like that. That’s not right.” This juxtaposition of an internalization and resistance speaks volumes to the ways in which Black girls navigate racialized gendered oppression. Egypt’s support of the Spelman College women boycotting Nelly’s bone marrow drive displays her resistance against and recognition of the racialized gendered oppression but

her adoption of the controlling image of the “hoochie” as true, displays the ways in which she internalized this oppression.

I refer to Egypt’s internalization and resistance against racialized gendered oppression as “mental gymnastics.” Mental gymnastics requires having to recognize that something is oppressing you but adopting that oppression in order to navigate and survive the existence of oppressive forces. I also argue that having to do mental gymnastics is a form of trauma that Black women endure as a result of racialized gendered oppression. Based on this analysis, it was clear that Egypt had already endured complex trauma by having to do the mental gymnastics to both internalize and resist the controlling image of the “hoochie” discussed in the film. When she arrived home later on that day and was physically assaulted by a neighbor, she experienced a second exposure to complex trauma through physical violence.

Complex Trauma: Physical Assault of the Body

McKinney, Texas, located a little over thirty minutes from South Dallas, was the site of much national media attention the summer this case study was conducted. On June 5, 2015 a group of Black youth visited a neighborhood pool located in a subdivision in McKinney, Texas to attend a friend’s graduation party. When these young people arrived at the party they were met with a great deal of animosity from the adults, who were mostly White, at the pool. The pool security guard and other adults called the police complaining of an alleged fight that broke out at the pool. When the police arrived many of the youth started to leave the pool area. One of the officers called out to the scene pulled out his gun and pointed it at some of the youth that were congregating

outside the pool. This same police officer then proceeded to shove a young Black girl still dressed in her swimsuit to the ground, sat on her, and pulled her hands behind her body. His actions were caught on video and it sprang the attention of national media and pushed the world to think about the ways in which the bodies of Black girls are not valued for protection. This lack of protection is rooted in a racialized gendered oppression.

When Ms. Vicki mentioned to Ms. Clark and Harold that Egypt's assailant probably believed she was much older than she actually was, I connect this to the idea to the value placed on the lives of Black girls. I argue that it is the existence of racialized gendered oppression that causes both Whites and Blacks to dehumanize Black girls in a way that justifies violently shoving a Black girl to the ground, sitting on top of her, and forcing her hands behind her body. The physical assault that occurred in McKinney is an example of how Black girls and women's bodies become sites where violent acts of trauma are acceptable. I apply the ways in which the youth argued that the women in the film we watched were not worthy of respect and protection to Egypt's assault. When I made the statement,

...Because you're dressed a certain way, then you should be treated a certain way is, you know, is that accurate? Is that right? So maybe we need to think about that a little more and what that means because like Ms. Clark said back in the day what she was wearing, it was seen exactly the same way that what the women on there were viewed as, right? So does that mean that they are supposed to be treated as less human?

- Aishia

I was attempting to engage the youth in dialogue about the ways in which the existence of racialized gendered oppression dehumanizes Black girls and women. This

dehumanization removes any notion that Black girls should be treated like youth and protected by adults. Goff, et al. (2014) argue that,

...because dehumanization involves the denial of full humanness to others..., one would expect a reduction of social considerations afforded to humans for those who are dehumanized. This reduction violates one defining characteristic of children— being innocent and thus needing protection—rendering the category “children” less essential and distinct from “adults.” This may also cause individuals to see Black children as more like adults or, more precisely, to see them as older than they are (p. 527).

The justification that Egypt looked older than what she really is removes Egypt’s innocence as a Black girl and assigns her the identity of a Black woman. This assigned identity renders Egypt no longer valuable enough for protection, an argument rooted in racialized gendered oppression.

In addition to this, the fact that the police never came to file a police report for Egypt’s assault illustrates the relationship Black youth, specifically Black girls, have with the police force in South Dallas. It seems that when a young person is in trouble and has even been assaulted, they may not be worthy of justice through the eyes of the police in South Dallas. I argue that Egypt experienced trauma when she was assaulted but she was exposed to it again when the police showed that she was not worthy of justice. In Egypt’s case, complex trauma consists of the lack of care and protection the police force in South Dallas has for Black youth, like Egypt. This lack of care and protection is traumatizing and is rooted in a racialized gendered oppression because Egypt’s very identity of being a Black girl is what causes the violent oppression of both her assault and lack of protection and justice from police. Black youth and their communities live in this constant state of fear that their lives are not worthy enough for

justice. Spaces of refuge like the SDCC create a sense of community that facilitates a healing process. After Egypt's assault, Ms. Vicki and the rest of the SAAC program staff provided community so Egypt and her family could begin the healing process.

Radical Healing: Performance as a Site for Healing and Resistance

Egypt began the healing process in a similar way to Blue's constructed performance as a site for healing and resistance. Egypt's assault is linked to the power of oppression that label her and other Black youth as adults who should not be provided protection and care. The mere existence of oppression is traumatic and constructing performance as a site to begin a healing process as an act of resistance against oppression is significant. Egypt dancing through the pain is a form of social action where she used performance art to begin a healing process. I connect the act of Egypt dancing to commence healing to Conquergood's (1991) concept of the politics of performance discussed earlier in the chapter.

I consider Egypt's actions of 1) returning to the SAAC program after her violent assault, 2) creating choreography for the final showcase, and 3) participating in the final showcase as *performance that facilitated the beginning of the healing process*. The politics of performance requires questioning the relationship between power and performance and I argue that when Egypt constructed performance as a site for healing and resistance, she worked against the power of racialized gendered oppression. When Egypt returned to the SAAC program and assumed the position of lead choreographer for the final showcase, she placed herself in a space of refuge that both supported and valued her identity as a Black girl. I consider the existence of the SAAC program as a

site of resistance against racialized gendered oppression for Egypt because it is a space that values Black performance as a site for survival (hooks, 1995). As opposed to having Egypt sit out from activity because of her pain, the staff of the SAAC program supported her in the leadership role she took on as a lead choreographer for the final showcase.

Egypt's use of her body to dance in spite of the physical and emotional trauma she had recently endured is an example of how the performance of a physical body is used as a site for knowledge, healing, and resistance. Although the performance was physically painful for her, she used her knowledge of hip-hop dance to perform through that pain in order to release anger and heal. Ginwright (2010a) argues that once a young person starts to heal from the pain of trauma, they begin to resist because pain is a barrier to resistance. Egypt centering the choreography around her pain does what Ginwright (2010a) considers exposing the raw truth about suffering from the racialized gendered oppression she endured.

In addition to this, Egypt's action of performing through the pain and trauma she experienced is also connected to a *performance of knowledge*. As Egypt learned about hip-hop history and dance throughout the five weeks of the program, she took in new knowledge about hip-hop culture. Through her performance, Egypt used her body as a site to illuminate the knowledge she gained about the art form of hip-hop. This also connected to the politics of performance because Egypt displayed a sense of power by sharing her knowledge of hip-hop dance through her performance. Egypt's healing involved performance to release pain and share knowledge.

While Egypt began to heal by constructing the performance of her body as a site for knowledge, healing, and resistance, her healing does not put an end to racialized gendered oppression. In the same way that Blue will continue to endure the oppressive forces of the school system, Egypt will continue to deal with the trauma associated with racialized gendered oppression. Although Ginwright (2010a) argues that the healing process results in wellness on the individual, social, and community levels for Black youth, he fails to recognize that the healing process does not end for these young people. While healing facilitates resistance against oppression and moves youth to engage in social action, they still experience trauma as a result of the existence of oppression. Based on the lived experiences of Blue and Egypt, healing is an ongoing process.

The application of the SJYD framework to the trauma Black youth, like Blue and Egypt, face each and every day, urges youth development professionals, researchers, teachers, counselors, and policy makers to recognize that healing from trauma is a process that never ends. Based on the lived experiences described above, oppressive forces became the root cause of the trauma youth experience. While the radical healing model places wellness as the outcome of the radical healing process, an in-depth analysis of the two vignettes above shed light on the ways in which the healing process will not end until oppressive forces that traumatize Black youth are dismantled.

Summary/ Conclusion

The two vignettes presented above highlight the importance of recognizing that oppression is traumatizing. I argue that based on Egypt's and Blue's lived experiences;

there is no end to the healing process unless the oppressive forces that exist in our society come to an end. As a result of the existence of larger systems of oppression, oppressed people will continue to experience trauma. This shared continuous healing from complex trauma creates a collective struggle. Based on the two vignettes above, I name healing as a social action that works against oppressive forces. Blue's experiences of trauma provide an insight on the ways in which complex trauma can be healed through poetic performance. When Blue wrote his poem, "Where I Come From" he was performing his pain and told the story of how he continued on with his development after he experienced his trauma. Blue provides an example of what Ginwright (2010a) means when he defines the radical healing process.

Egypt's assailant physically and mentally traumatized her and the suspected reason behind the assault was rooted in a racialized gendered oppression that rendered Egypt not worthy of protection or care in the eyes of the justice system. Egypt's story illuminates the ways in which systems of power like the police force in South Dallas do not exist to protect or care for Black youth and I argue that as a result of this lack of protection and care, this system does not care about the lives of Black youth or their healing. As a result, once Black youth enter into a healing process they are actively resisting these power systems.

The two vignettes in this chapter display examples of a concept referred to as everyday racism which involves "systemic, recurrent, and familiar practices" (Essed, 1991, p. 3). This form of racism is "defined in terms of practices prevalent in a given system. Note that practices are not just "acts" but also include complex relations of acts

and (attributed) attitudes” (Essed, 1991, p. 3). Both Egypt and Blue experienced recurrent forms of racism through the systems they came into contact with and the attitudes of people in their community and systems. Practices of the Dallas Police Department like not responding to Egypt’s physical assault could be considered examples of everyday racism. Further examples of everyday racism can be viewed through the examination of Blue experiencing recurrent trauma from the foster care system and the education system. Experiencing everyday racism is known to lead to stress syndromes like post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Thompson-Miller, 2011). I connect the PTSD associated with everyday racism to the radical healing process for youth like Egypt and Blue. Due to the fact that their trauma is recurrent and continues to happen as they navigate through systems, their healing process is continuous.

This chapter attempted to reframe how we understand trauma and the healing processes for Black youth. Through the use of vignettes, it explored the different ways youth enrolled in the SAAC program utilize performance to resist power structures to begin the healing process. By engaging in in-depth discussion about the oppressive structures and systems in the lives of Blue and Egypt, I am not attempting to excuse Blue's abuser and Egypt's assailant. My goal for this chapter is to highlight the connection that trauma and abuse Black youth that attend the SAAC program endure to the oppressive forces that control their everyday lived experiences. Egypt’s and Blue's lived experiences discussed in this chapter provide insight into the importance of reframing trauma and the connection it has with the discussions and topics surrounding Black youth, healing, resistance, and performance. The next chapter will bring all the

findings from this case study together to discuss how the healing process is centered around the concept of community. It is the sense of community in the SDCC that creates a *“healing space of refuge”* for Black youth in South Dallas.

CHAPTER VII

LEARNING FROM SJYD FRAMEWORK: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

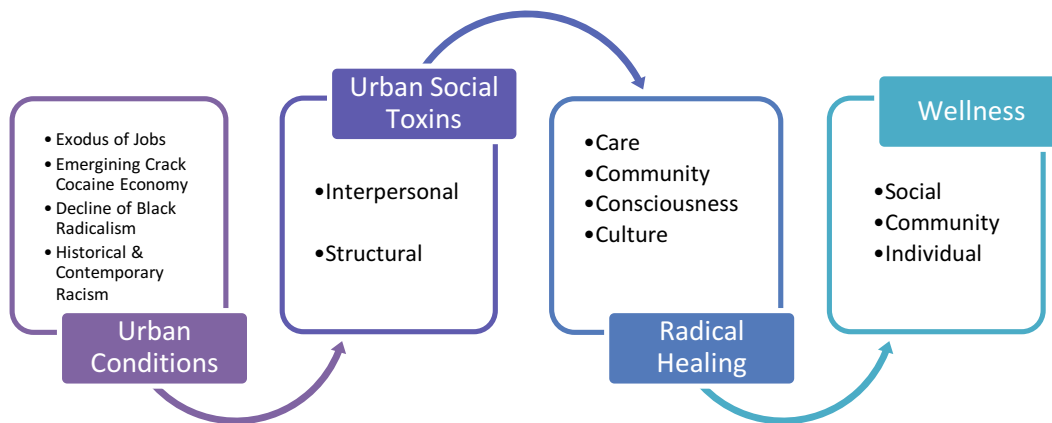
This chapter ties together the preceding chapters by 1) presenting a summary of the major findings from this case study, 2) defining the term “*healing space of refuge*,” 3) provide a critique of the radical healing model, 4) present recommendations for future research, and 5) discuss the study limitations and implications. Finally, I will provide some concluding remarks to reflect on the importance of this study for Black youth and their communities. This purpose of this case study was to advance the field of youth development’s understanding of the SJYD framework and the radical healing process by examining the facilitation of the radical healing process at a 5-week summer arts program in South Dallas, Texas. While the radical healing model was created based on a culmination of data from an SJYD program in Oakland, California, this study set out to understand the specific processes that facilitated the radical healing process in a summer arts program.

Summary of Major Findings

This case study was created to better understand the SJYD framework (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002) and the radical healing model (Ginwright, 2010a) in a summer arts youth development program. SJYD is a framework that “acknowledges social contexts and highlights the capacity for youth to respond to community problems

and heal from the psycho/social wounds of hostile urban environments” (Ginwright & Cammorato, 2002, p. 87). SJYD places a focus on viewing youth as agents of social change. The radical healing model falls under the SJYD framework and involves examining how the conditions youth live under effect their development on both the interpersonal (micro) and structural (macro) levels (Ginwright, 2010a). The radical healing model goes on to propose that if Black youth have a radical healing process, which consist of the development of *1) care (caring relationships), 2) community, 3) critical consciousness, and 4) culture*, they will achieve well-being or wellness on a social, community, and individual level (See Figure 8 below).

Figure 8: Radical Healing Model Revisited



In chapter I I provided a brief review of the literature on the SJYD framework (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002) and the radical healing model (Ginwright, 2010a). The results of this case study adds to the body of literature discussed in this review in three ways. First, it connects and provides evidence into the significant relationship between artistic expression and radical healing. Second, this case study provides empirical evidence into the relationship between trauma and oppression as well as oppressive forces at the macro and micro levels. Finally, in this chapter I will reconstruct the radical healing model to better fit the processes involved in facilitating the four components of the radical healing process (*care, community, critical consciousness, and culture*) displayed in the SAAC program. It is with hopes that through the reconstruction of the radical healing model incites youth development researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to modify models and frameworks to fit the needs of the the youth they serve in their programs and communities.

My original intent for this case study was to examine the program processes in a youth development program that Ginwright (2010a) argues facilitates the healing process for Black youth. Based on this intent, I developed the research questions displayed in figure 9 below:

Figure 9: Original Case Study Research Questions Revisited



Based on these research questions, I proposed the following hypothesis:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Hypothesis 1 (H1): | There is correlation between the 5-week youth development program as a whole and the components of the radical healing process. |
| Hypothesis 2 (H2): | There is a correlation between the program processes and the components of the radical healing process. |
| Hypothesis 3 (H3): | There is a correlation between the program process of artistic expression and the components of the radical healing process. |

The 5-week data collection for this case study consisted of an immersion into the culture of the SAAC program and the community of South Dallas. As a result, this case study evolved into a critical ethnographic process that relied heavily on lived experiences. I discovered that the lived experiences held the answer to the program processes that facilitate radical healing for Black youth attending the SAAC program. Based on the evolving nature of this case study, the research questions shifted from examining

program processes directly to investigating the four components that Ginwright (2010a) argues make up the radical healing process (*care, community, critical consciousness, and culture*). Figure 10 provides the adapted research questions:

Figure 10: Revised Research Questions Revisited



This case study found that youth in the SAAC program were undergoing a radical healing process based on Ginwright’s (2010a) model but this radical healing process was one component of a larger system that created what I call a ‘*healing space of refuge*.’ While this case study applied Ginwright’s (2010a) radical healing process (*care, community, critical consciousness, and culture*) to the SAAC program, it found that the program processes involved in facilitating radical healing for the youth in the program

differed from what the original model (Figure 8) proposes. The following sections will provide an overview of the three components that made up the radical healing process in the SAAC program. These three SAAC radical healing processes are:

- (1) Enacting radical care
- (2) Celebration of cultural identity
- (3) Culture of critical thinking to build critical consciousness

These three processes are held in comparison to Ginwright's (2010a) model. The removal of the second component, *community*, of his radical healing process, will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

Radical Healing Process 1: Enacting Radical Care

The first component of the original radical healing process is *care* or caring relationships (Ginwright, 2010a). Ginwright (2010a) defined care as the development of trust, holding shared expectations, or deep connections between individuals. The concept of *radical care*, also proposed by Ginwright (2010a), emphasizes the importance of care to sustain the life of the communities for youth. Ginwright defines radical care as “a specific mode of care related to communal survival that involves the actions of community members supporting one another through difficult times and hardships like death, homelessness, or illness” (2010a, p. 68). Radical care within the context of the SAAC program was enacted to protect and improve the lives of young people connected to the SDCC in order to *sustain* the life of the South Dallas community.

Based on the data from this case study, it is through radical care that Black youth in South Dallas build what is referred to in the field of youth development as community

connectedness (Zeldin & Topitzes, 2002). Zeldin and Topitzes argue that “two dimensions of community connectedness – sense of community and adult caring – are of particular importance...to understand beliefs about the civic motivation and competence of adolescents” (2002, p. 652). While Zeldin & Topitzes (2002) propose that adult caring and sense of community are two separate dimensions, this case study showed that these two dimensions were dependent upon one another. In order for the youth in the SAAC program to feel a sense of community, caring adults took certain actions to construct a space of refuge that supported their existence as Black youth in a positive way.

This case study found that radical care was enacted by the adults through 1) the development of familial relationships, 2) social actions adults took to resist structures that oppressed youth in the community, and 3) adoption of tactics to ensure the well-being of the youth in the community despite organizational policies.

In the field of youth development, research on caring adults name youth workers that are supportive and provide resources for success as “wizards” (McLaughlin, et al., 1994). These youth wizards hold a “love for and commitment to youth, a mission and vision to serve others, and a passion for a particular set of activities” (McLaughlin, et al., 1994, p. 38). Youth wizards can be applied to the adult staff and teachers of the SAAC program who took actions that displayed their care for youth and their strong commitment to the their well-being. To build on the concept of wizards in youth serving organizations, I extend the care they display as a form of resistance against macro level social, political, and economic forces (Brooks, 2006). Chapter III discussed how Ms. Vicki provides youth with opportunities for personal development, like swimming

lessons, to combat the social issue of the large number of youth that drown in the community.

The resistance against the free Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) to combat the rates of diabetes and high blood pressure in the South Dallas community, discussed in Chapter III, is another example of how program staff displayed care to protect youth against forms of oppression on the community level (the local food agency providing the food) and institutional level (the government entity (USDA) funding the program). By advocating for local government officials to evaluate the free SFSP program, SAAC program staff employed anti-oppressive approaches (Kumashiro, 2002) to advocate for changes in the community at the local and structural level. Anti-oppressive approaches consist of challenging or working against forms of oppression (Kumashiro, 20000). When SAAC program staff challenged the free SFSP they displayed a commitment to the physical health of the youth that attend the program and this is why I label program staff as wizards (McLaughlin, et al., 1994).

Youth development approaches that care about the physical health of young people tend to focus on how the individual child needs to make healthier eating choices and exercise more (Wadden, et al., 1990; Braet, et al., 2004), however, an anti-oppressive approach would combat this issues on both the individual and structural level. Storey, et al., (2009) propose the importance of understanding the local and federal policies around USDA food funded programs like the free SFSP in addition to providing education to youth about healthy eating behavior. I argue that working against oppression in the life of a young person on both the micro and macro level is an anti-

oppressive approach. These anti-oppressive approaches make the care displayed in the SAAC program, radical.

While there are no research studies examining the role of anti-policy in youth serving organizations, this topic emerged as a theme in this case study. It is closely related to the concept of creating anti-oppressive environments for marginalized youth (Kumashiro, 2002). Anti-oppressive environments work against the ways oppression play out in the environment (Kumashiro, 2002). The adoption of tactics like providing housing to a homeless young person in the program discussed in Chapter III is considered anti-oppressive because it works against a young person entering into an oppressive system like foster care and based on Ginwright's (2010a) definition above, this is an act of radical care. The existence of radical care in the SAAC program extended outside of the space of the SDCC and into the community. These community connections were significant to the survival and well-being of the youth in the program and the community of South Dallas.

Radica Healing Process 2: Celebration of Cultural Identity (Blackness)

Another component of the radical healing process is **culture**. Ginwright proposes that “culture serves as an anchor to connect young people to a racial and ethnic identity that is both historically grounded and contemporarily relevant” (2010a, p. 10). Cross, et al. (1991) conceptualized identity development for Black youth in what is referred to as the five stages of Nigrescence. In the Nigrescence model, youth go through a process of not really being aware of their Black identity to becoming comfortable with their own Black identity and the racial identity of others (Cross, et al., 1991). This is important

because it provides an insight into the stages Black youth go through as they develop a positive cultural identity. Each stage could be considered an *outcome* in the Nigrescence model and this sheds light on the importance of having empirical evidence to better understand what *processes* come together to create the outcome of positive cultural identity development in Black youth. Phinney argues that “As an aspect of identity, ethnic identity can be expected to be of particular importance during adolescence” (1992, p. 157). Holding a positive identity is important and needed in the lives of young people because it provides them with a sense of connection with others, these connections develop psychosocial skills in young people (Erikson, 1994). This case study found that positive cultural identity development was more than just developing a positive view of one’s Black identity, it consisted of an actual celebration of blackness¹⁸.

This celebration of blackness was illustrated through the actions of Malik, the hip-hop music production teacher, in Chapter V. In this chapter I describe how Malik helped youth participant Bug understand how her blackness gives her the ability to create and construct a specialized form of music, hip-hop. Blackness is also celebrated through the SDCC moto of “*The South Dallas Cultural Center, where the Black experience is more than just a slogan*” and the ways in which they center Black history and art discussed in Chapter II and Chapter V.

I argue that the difference between holding a positive view of one’s identity and celebrating one’s identity is in the action of the individual. A positive view of one’s cultural identity is a thought process grounded in personal experiences. A celebration of

¹⁸ I use the term blackness here to refer to the cultural cues associated with Black identity (Walters, 2007).

cultural identity is a collective activity that includes interactions with one another that commemorates how individual identities are connected through culture. This celebration of blackness occurred at the community level in the SAAC program and in the SDCC as a whole. The celebration of blackness served as a primary focus of what Ginwright (2010a) refers to as a celebration of Black youth culture, specifically hip-hop. SAAC program staff employed collective action through the dedication of two classes for youth to engage in hip-hop culture and the use of visual media like the film *Beyond Beats and Rhymes* (Hurt, 2006), to create what one of the case study participants referred to as a “culture of critical thinking.” The role of critical thinking in cultural identity development leads to continued celebration that reinforces a positive cultural identity in Black youth.

Radical Healing Process 3: Culture of Critical Thinking Builds Critical Consciousness

Critical Consciousness is another component of the radical healing process. Ginwright (2010a) defines critical consciousness as a process of building awareness of the intersections of personal and political life by pushing youth to understand how personal struggles have profound political explanations. According to Thomas, et al. (2014), critical consciousness has been examined as “awareness of inequity, oppression, and liberation; as a skill set to help individuals to deconstruct or “depersonalize” experiences of oppression as they occur; and as the ability to understand other’s perspectives or thoughts” (p. 486). This case study found that youth developed critical consciousness through their engagement with a space that maintains a “culture of critical thinking” where misunderstandings about social, political, and economic issues are

addressed as a collective and individually. Although adolescence is a time where youth are developing their autonomy, Jennings, et al., (2006) found that the development of critical consciousness on both the individual and community levels led to higher rates of empowerment that engendered engagement in social action.

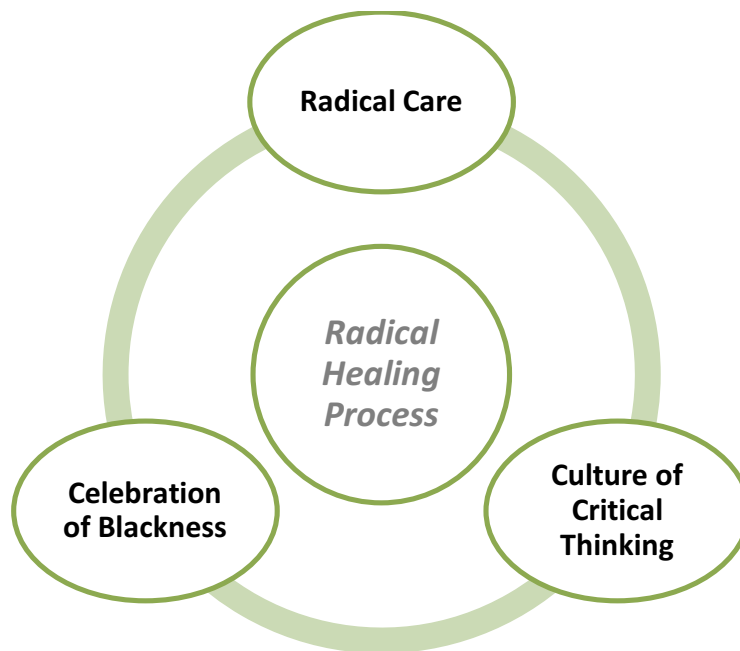
In the SAAC program, if a young person displays an individual misunderstanding, staff and teachers address it in front of their peers in order to build a collective development of critical thinking skills. For example, in Chapter IV when Brandon discusses how he learned the truth about Abraham Lincoln freeing the slaves, this was an individual thought that he expressed aloud in front of his classmates and Ms. Vicki took Brandon's individual thoughts and brought it into a collective space where Brandon and his peers learned the importance of critical thinking together. Brandon's story, illustrated in Chapter IV, provides insight into how the SAAC program builds critical consciousness in a way that provides youth with a sense of empowerment to engage in social action. Brandon illustrated this when he spoke about plans of rebuilding community spaces like the local recreation center that was vital to his development as a young person. This is one example of how the existence of the culture of critical thinking in the SAAC provide youth with the skills to create change at both the micro and macro levels of their environments or communities.

Making Sense of the Findings: Ecological Systems Theory and SJYD

These three major findings share one important theme, the value and importance of **community** in the lives of Black youth. It was through community that youth gained access to 1) adults that enacted radical care, 2) a culture of critical thinking that

assisted them in building their critical consciousness, and 3) a space to celebrate their cultural identity (blackness). Figure 11 provides a visual of these three radical healing processes.

Figure 11: SAAC Program Radical Healing Process



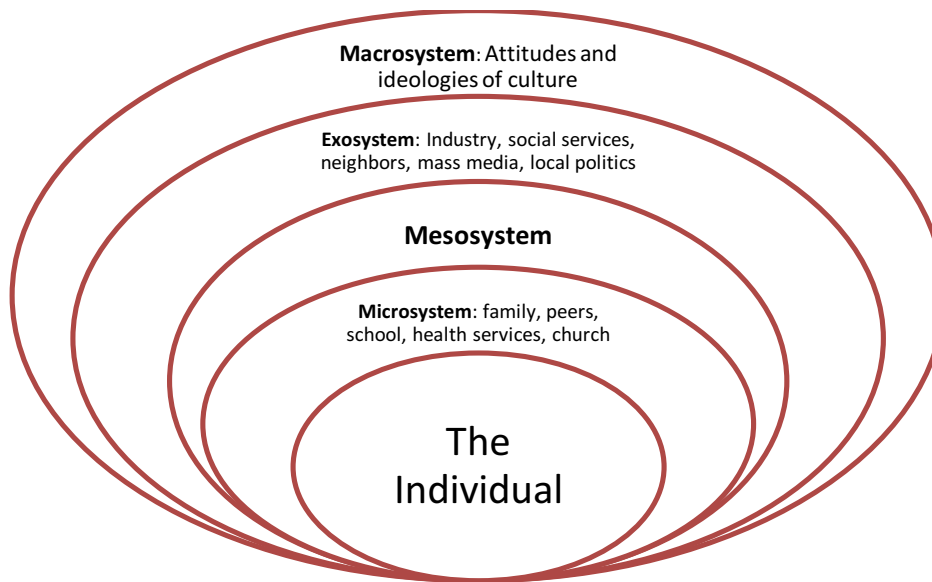
I make sense of these major findings by applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory and Ginwright and Cammrota's (2002) Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD) framework to this case study.

It is through the concept of community, presented in both the ecological systems theory and the SJYD framework, that these research findings unite and construct an adaptation to Ginwright's (2010a) radical healing model. According to Bronfenbrenner,

...the understanding of human development demands more than the direct observation of behavior on the part of one or two persons in the same place; it requires examination of multiperson systems of interaction not limited to a single setting and must take into account aspects of the environment beyond the immediate situation containing the subject (1979, p. 21).

The concept of community relies on the existence of an environment where individuals become connected and interact with multiple people, institutions, and structures. The ecological systems proposes that there are four environmental systems that individuals interact with: 1) microsystem or immediate environment (consists of family, peers, school, health services, church), 2) mesosystem or connections (consists of relationships between microsystems), 3) exosystem or indirect environment (consists of industry, social services, neighbors, mass media, local politics), 4) macrosystem or social and cultural values (consists of attitudes and ideologies of the culture) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) sheds light on the importance of community in the life of an individual, and specifically a young person. Figure 12 provides a visual of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

Figure 12: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory



While the ecological systems theory acknowledges that there is a larger system that affects the development of children or young people, it does not directly discuss how this larger system could be considered an oppressive force in the development of a child or young person. The SJYD framework connects to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory by recognizing the social, political, health, and economic systems that youth come into contact with in their everyday lives but it takes it one step further by placing a critical lens of the relationship these systems have with the oppression that young people endure (Ginwright & Cammrota, 2002). Research shows that youth who recognize their relationship to the micro and macro level systems in their environment, use critical consciousness as a tool to advocate for social change in their communities at both levels (Ginwright, 2010a; Ginwright, Nogeura, and Cammarota, 2006; Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Ginwright & James, 2002). This supports the results of this case study

that showed the significance of community in the lives of youth enrolled in the SAAC program.

Throughout this dissertation I have applied the SJYD framework through my recognition that systems of oppression exist and Black youth in South Dallas are navigating these systems in order to survive. Recognition of these systems is what makes the healing that the youth in the SAAC program experience radical. In spite of the social, political, and economic oppressive forces working against their healthy development, these youth are still provided with the space to heal in the microsystem of their environment through the three radical healing processes (*radical care, culture of critical thinking, and celebration of blackness*) that this case study found to exist in the “*healing space of refuge*” of the SDCC.

Radical Healing Model Critique

As discussed in Chapter I, the radical healing model recognizes that Black youth live under certain conditions that create what Garbarino (1995) refers to as social toxins. These social toxins are both structural (e.g. the existence of poverty) and interpersonal (e.g. acts of violence and feelings of having no control) (Ginwright, 2010a). Ginwright (2010a) argues that the radical healing process accelerates youth into achieving wellness or a sense of well-being, which is considered a sense of “power and control over internal and external forms of oppression” (Ginwright, 2010a, p. 18). Although I used the radical healing model, and specifically the radical healing process to guide this case study, I found differences between the radical healing process that Ginwright (2010a)

constructed based on his experiences with youth development programs in Oakland, CA and the SAAC program in South Dallas, TX. The following section will provide a critique to the radical model through the application of the major findings from this case study.

Radical Healing and Gender

Although Ginwright (2010a) places a critical lens on trauma and oppression as it relates to race and racism that Black youth experience through the creation of the radical healing model, he fails to critically address oppression as it relates to gender directly in the model. Chapter VI provides an insight into how the intersection of racial and gender identities effect the lives of Black girls like Egypt. Within the last couple of years, researchers like Ruth Nicole Brown (2013) and Bettina Love (2012) have examined how Black girls who attend youth development programs, like the SAAC program, use art and culture to critique and resist against the micro and macro level systems that cause their oppression.

An examination of how gender influences the way a young person is oppressed is an important area of study. For this particular case study, internalized racialized gendered oppression was significant to Egypt's lived experience of assault. A deconstruction of how healing can assist Black girls from internalizing racialized gendered oppression is another important area of study. This case study provided one example of how Black girls' lived experiences around internalized racialized gendered oppression and trauma can lead to a healing process. Further research is needed to examine this relationship further.

Wellness as an Outcome

Based on the results of this case study, I argue that applying the concept of wellness as an outcome to healing for Black youth should be contested. As a result of Black youth, and Black people in general, having to exist under the power structure of white supremacy capitalist heteropatriarchy (hooks, 1996), there can never truly be wellness or a sense of well-being for Black youth or their communities unless these power structures are dismantled. Black youth in the SAAC program are constantly forced to exist under and navigate structures that continuously oppress them at the macro, exo, and systems level and the role of true healing, as presented by Ginwright (2010a) can never be obtained.

Despite Ginwright's (2010a) insistence that the final outcome to healing is wellness, this case study illustrates that radical healing is a process that does not stop. This argument is supported by the self-help literature which describes alcoholism as a never-ending process to reach a state of wellness. Self-help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) encourage its participants to understand that they will always be alcoholics and as a result, they will always need to be in recovery and a part of an AA group (Alcoholic Anonymous [AA] World Services, 1955). In addition to this, De la Rey, et al. (1998) found that healing was an ongoing process for the South Africans in their study who experienced suffering or trauma from apartheid. De la Rey, et al. (1998) writes,

There were many references to healing as a process, especially from the interviews with NGO personnel. This may be indicative of the close contact that NGO personnel have with victims in a healing capacity... Besides the frequent appending of the word "process" to the word "healing," the sense of a process

emerged through people using metaphors of a journey and referring to movement and time. Mention was made of beginnings but no ends.

Cienfuegos and Monelli (1983) express,

healing requires restoration of the individual's capacity to resume the course of their lives; it involving making their previous history –political commitment, personal relationships, work, and social connections –meaningful in the present and future (p. 44)

Guthrey (2015), argue that based on Cienfuegos and Monelli's (1983) definition of healing above, "healing is not necessarily a 'linear' process that adheres to a certain pattern for every victim" (2015, p. 11). Based on the conceptualization of healing described by the authors above, healing can be compared to the West African concept of *Sankofa* which proposes the importance of going back to your roots (or reflect on your personal experiences and the experiences of your ancestors) in order to move forward. If we apply *Sankofa* to the healing process, it becomes a process where one is moving forward but not in a linear way because they are constantly "going back" to reflect on their personal experiences.

Ginwright conceptualizes healing in this same way when he writes, "Healing involves reconciling the past to change the present while imagining a new future. Invoking the West African term, *Sankofa*, I use healing to describe the process of learning from the past in order to move forward" (2010a, p. 11). Ginwright then goes on to argue that the focus of radical healing is not necessarily moving from "pathology to wellness." (2010a, p. 11). While Ginwright (2010a) makes this argument, his radical healing model does not blatantly illustrate the idea that healing is never ending. Recognizing healing as a nonlinear process is important for the field of youth

development to understand that placing a focus on the end product of healing, does not reflect the lived experiences of Black youth in this case study.

Although the youth in the program go to the space of the SDCC to experience healing, they eventually have to leave and face the oppressive social, political, and economic forces in their exo and macro systems. However, it is the healing space of refuge that gives them the drive and motivation to continue to move forward by advocating for social change and working against oppressive social, political, and economic forces. Despite the racialized gendered oppression that caused Egypt's physical and mental assault, discussed in Chapter IV, it was the return to the healing space of refuge that provided her the space to engage in social action by using performance as a site of healing and resistance. While the radical healing model does provide youth development researchers and practitioners with the knowledge that Black youth have to navigate: 1) the trauma associated with living in poor urban neighborhoods where they may experience and see violence and 2) oppressive forces that exist in the institutions and structures they come into contact, it fails to recognize the ongoing nature of a healing process.

Community as a Healing Process Component

Ginwright (2010a) proposes that **community** is one of four components of the radical healing model. He goes on to argue that community is a space for youth to conceive hope and shed fear and pain to move forward into a sense of well-being or wellness (2010a). Although Ginwright (2010a) proposes that community is one of the four main components in the radical healing process that leads to wellness or well-being,

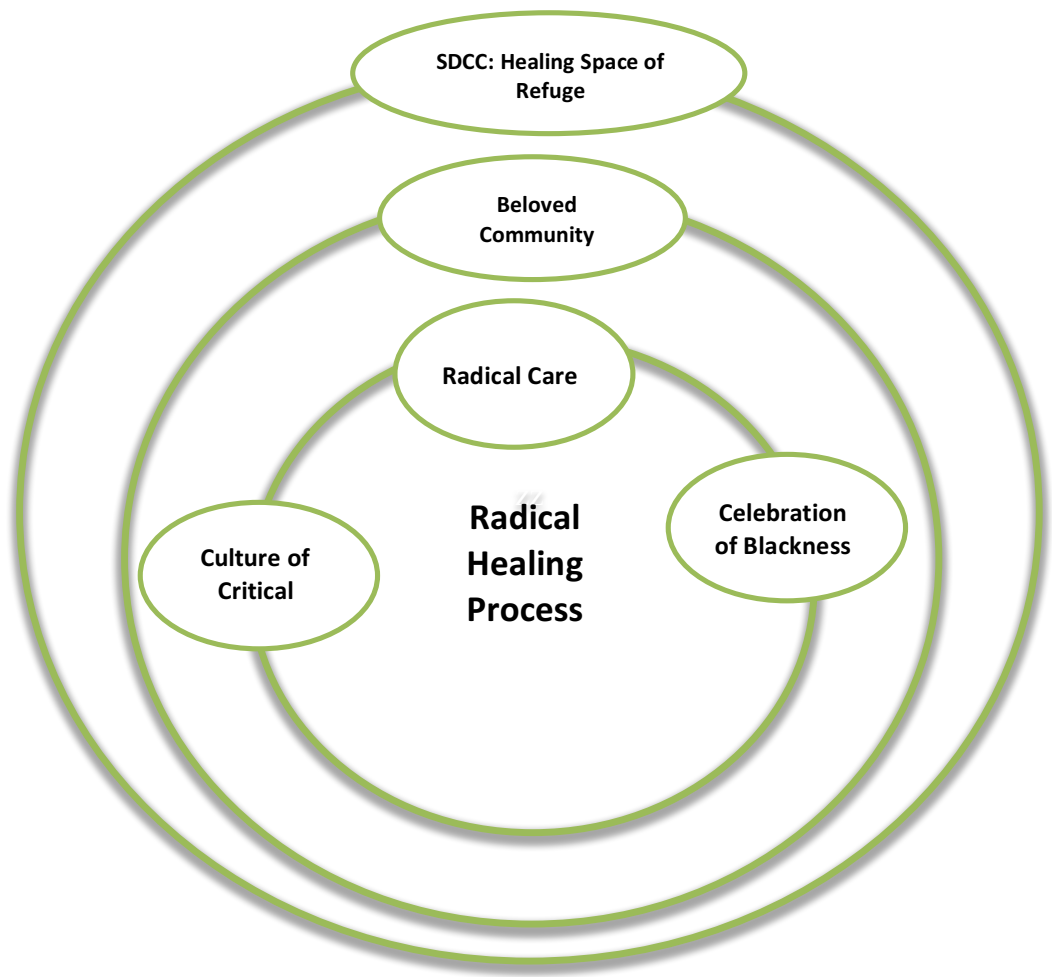
he fails to separate it from the other three components of radical healing. The data from this case study found the existence of community and youth feeling a sense of community throughout all coded themes related to the other three components of the radical healing process (*care, critical consciousness, and culture*). In other words, community existed through *care* (caring relationships), *critical consciousness*, and *culture*. In the “*healing space of refuge*” of the SDCC, community is what connects the other three components of Ginwright’s (2010a) radical healing process (*care, critical consciousness, culture*). This case study found that care, critical consciousness, and culture fall under community which is rooted in the love that exists within that community. This will be explored further in the section below.

Radical Healing at the SDCC

This case study found that the process of radical healing is just one component of a larger system that I have referred to as a “*healing space of refuge*.” While Ginwright (2010a) contextualized radical healing as a linear process, I view it as an embedded structures that are similar to Bronfenbrenner’s (1994) ecological systems theory. Figure 13 below provides a visual representation of the components that make up radical healing at the SDCC. In this figure you will find, the major findings from this case study in the center. The three radical healing processes that exist in the SAAC program are: 1) *celebration of cultural identity* (blackness), 2) *culture of critical thinking*, and 3) *radical care*. This is different than Ginwright’s (2010a) model that includes community in the radical healing process. This case study found that community is actually the envelope that covers the radical healing process. I use the term ‘*beloved community*’ (hooks, 1995)

to describe the community in this new radical healing model. Outside of this ‘beloved community’ is a healing space of refuge (The SDCC) that houses and protects the beloved community. The following section will provide a definition to the concept of “*healing space of refuge*” based on the findings from this case study.

Figure 13: Radical Healing at the SDCC



Defining a Healing Space of Refuge

So I know in terms of not just the cultural aspect, the cultural aspect, like the specific context, but in terms of the cultural center as a safe place as a family-oriented program with the people who believe in us so you can kind of see the change.

- Harold, Assistant Program Manager

So, you know, I love South Dallas and even though there are a lot of issues around crime and this, that and the other, we don't see it here and we're not blind to it. We know that a lot of our children have these issues because they see it all the time, but we also feel that because of that we can become a haven, a real safe haven for them. I mean, I can't tell you how many kids have actually said to us "you saved my life." You know, because we know that we're redirecting energies that could be another way.

- Vicki, Program Manager

Shoot. For those who about to listen to this just bring your kids, you'll see. Just stop by one day, you'll see all the love that's here...Here you learn about yourself, you learn about others, you learn about love, you learn about, you know, you learn, you learn the things that you need for life. You need compassion and passion and all that stuff. To, just to move forward...

- Brandon, Former Youth Participant and Teaching Assistant

I have adopted the term “*healing space of refuge*” to attempt to put words to the collective healing space that is the SDCC. According to Ginwright, “There are spaces of refuge that are often hidden from public view that allow African American youth to reconcile, confront, and heal from psychic wounds. However, these spaces are often misunderstood and grossly undertheorized” (2010a, p. 79). Based on this argument, I provide my understanding of a healing space of refuge and its proposed dimensions. I have discussed the dimension of the radical healing process above as the three major findings of this study. In the section below, I will deconstruct and define the dimension of “beloved community” (hooks, 1995).

Beloved Community

When we are wounded in the place where we would know love, it is difficult to imagine that love really has the power to change everything. No matter what has happened in our past, when we open our hearts to love we can live as if born again, not forgetting the past but seeing it in a new way, letting it live inside us in a new way. We go forward with the fresh insight that the past can no longer hurt us. Or if our past was one in which we were loved, we know that no matter the occasional presence of suffering in our lives we will return always to remembered calm and bliss. Mindful remembering lets us put the broken bits and pieces of our hearts together again. This is the way healing begins... Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation. Healing is an act of communion.

- bell hooks, *All About Love* (2001)

The only thing that breaks the cycle of pain, fear is profound LOVE!

- Cornel West, *Black Doctoral Network Conference* (2015)

Love illustrates a contested terrain of ideas, in this case, the power of an idea to mean many things and to move people to action.

- Patricia Hill Collins, *The New Politics of Community* (2010)

The SJYD framework argues that youth exist in communities, not in schools, and programs (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Understanding communities that youth live in requires an understanding of the healing spaces within their community. It is through an in-depth analysis of their lived experiences that I was able to conceptualize the feelings or emotions participants had about community with what hooks (1995) refers to as “transformative love.” hooks (1995) writes,

In the segregated South those black and white folks who struggled together for racial justice (many of whom grounded their actions not in radical politics but in religious conviction) were bound by a shared belief in the transformative power of love. Understanding that love was the antithesis of the will to dominate and subjugate, we allowed that longing to know love, to love one another, to radicalize us politically. That love was not sentimental. It did not blind us to the reality that racism was deeply systemic and that only by realizing that love in concrete political actions that might involve sacrifice, even the surrender of one’s

life, would white supremacy be fundamentally challenged. We knew the sweetness of beloved community (1995, p. 253).

Transformative love acknowledges the idea that love is how oppression ends. Freire also argues this when he writes,

Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. It is thus necessarily the task of responsible Subjects and cannot exist in relation to domination...Because love is an act of courage, not fear, love is commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is a commitment to their cause— the cause of liberation. And this commitment, because it is loving, is dialogical (2009, p. 89).

The existence of a beloved community, which hooks defines as a site where “loving ties of care and knowing binds us together in our differences” (1995, p. 252), maintains and sustains the SDCC as a healing space of refuge for the South Dallas community. Although the SDCC is a physical place, the beloved community that exists inside of the space lives inside each of the young people and adults that participated in this case study.

Beloved Community Characteristic: Recognizing Systems of Oppression Exist

You know, no, they're the one [youth] who are out there trying to do something and we feel like we're also, because we're working with their parents, we're also helping to get their parents to understand that I don't care what the power structures says, how do you think we've gotten where we've gotten today. We didn't get there by listening to the power structure and thinking, oh they'll take care of it. You know, we did it by organized actions.

- Vicki, Program Manager

So it's more again about educating on systems and practices than this is just what it is. So at least if you know your way around what systems were at play, you can pick and choose how you participate or not or how you call it out.”

- Harold, Assistant Program Manager

Institutions like recreational facilities and programs acknowledge the importance of building resilience in marginalized communities (Green, et al., 2000; Ellis, et al., 2001). These recreational facilities and programs employ theories that argue these youth need a magic set of developmental assets (Leffert, et al., 1998) to be resilient without recognizing the ways in which power structures effect their development. I argue that one component of development for Black youth identifies not only an understanding that they are oppressed but also the value of having a healing space of refuge that 1) is accepting of their healing processes, 2) understands the oppression that creates trauma in their lives, and 3) supports them in advocating for social change and the end to the very oppressive forces that normalize their trauma.

One important characteristic of the SDCC as a healing space of refuge was that the individuals maintaining it, like Ms. Vicki and Harold, recognize the relationship the oppressive forces have in the lives of the youth they serve. According to Shaw, et al., “Although this temptation to focus on what makes an individual overcome adversity is consistent with valued cultural narratives, it turns our attention away from other important factors in resilience—structures and systems that can either exacerbate adversity or support success” (2016, p. 35). Healing spaces of refuge not only recognize the effects oppression has on the development of Black youth, it also recognizes that although youth have to be resilient in order to endure the oppressive forces they need a space where the focus shifts from resilience to healing.

Study Implications and Limitations

Ginwright and Cammrota write that “We become closer to our humanity and agents of our own development when we reflect and act to transform the conditions influencing our existence” (2002, p. 87). If the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework is centered on the importance of youth being agents in their own development, then the field of youth development must focus their research on ways to understand the relationship between the development of youth and their necessity to become agents in their own development by creating social change. The implications for this study shed light on the idea that the field of youth development must acknowledge the importance of community in the lives of Black youth. It is through community that these healing spaces of refuge are maintained and sustained. The SDCC is considered a recreational space in the eyes of the City of Dallas, and when we begin to ponder the relationship between recreational facilities and healing spaces of refuge, we need to be thinking beyond basic management of safety in terms of personal safety, but also safety from structural oppressions. I argue that this safety is facilitated through empowering youth with skills like critical consciousness and enacting radical care that are needed to advocate for social change.

If recreational facilities and programs are forged the task of promoting health and well-being, then it has a responsibility to provide spaces for healing for oppressed communities. The field of leisure and recreation should make it a top priority to ensure that their facilities and programs serve as a refuge for marginalized people who need spaces to heal from the trauma inflicted on them from the very institutions that are

charged with the task of providing service to them. Understanding that most recreation and parks departments are government entities and are very much a part of institutions of oppression, they also hold a mission that gives them the space to take radical measures for the purpose of serving community needs.

Although this study found that radical healing exist in the SDCC as an embedded set of systems that included the dimensions of (1) a healing space of refuge, (2) a beloved community, (3) a radical healing process consisting of radical care, culture of critical thinking, and a celebration of identity, there were a number of limitations:

- (1) This study only examined one case which makes it difficult to generalize across youth programs
- (2) This study lacks data from parents and members of the community that are not necessarily connected with the SDCC
- (3) This study only examined radical healing based on one specific model proposed by Ginwright (2010a)
- (4) The duration of this case study was only 5-weeks

Recommendations for Future Research

This case study added to the body of research on SJYD and radical healing in the field of youth development. I recommend that future research examine:

- 1) What happens when youth age out of programs like the SAAC and how they may or may not continue healing outside of their spaces of refuge

- 2) Multiple spaces of refuge in order to better understand their place in the healthy development of Black youth
- 3) How these spaces of refuge maintain the space in spite of their ties to institutions that may be the source of the oppression in the lives of the youth
- 4) The structures (government entities, non-profits, etc.) that create and maintain these healing spaces of refuge
- 5) Racialized gendered oppression more closely to see if the gender identity of a young person affects what their healing spaces of refuge look like or if they have healing spaces of refuge at all
- 6) The characteristics of staff members that work in healing spaces of refuge and their training needs
- 7) How other healing spaces of refuge engage with parents and communities

Recommendations for the SAAC Program

While this case study found that the SAAC program facilitated the components of the radical healing process (*care, community, critical consciousness, and culture*) in a number of ways, there is a great deal of opportunity for improvement in how radical healing is facilitated. I recommend that the SAAC program managers and staff examine the following:

- 1) Incorporate the SJYD framework and radical healing model into staff trainings to cultivate more deliberate and intentional programming.
- 2) Develop a detailed institutional memory for the SDCC by documenting the history and curriculum developed during each summer.
- 3) Critically address gender, specifically internalized racialized gendered oppression, in the development of the curriculum each summer
- 4) Create more opportunities for staff to receive training modules on topics like: Teaching to Transgress, Anti-Oppressive Education, Positive Youth-Adult Relationships, Youth Voice, and Critical Pedagogy.

Concluding Reflections

“Yea, yea, there’s a whole lot of love...It’s the sunny South baby.”

- Brandon, Former Youth

My purpose in writing this dissertation was to not only expand the research on the SJYD framework and radical healing model. I also wanted to immerse myself into a community as a researcher in order to bridge a gap between research and practice. Through some of my previous research on culturally-specific youth development programs, I discovered that these programs were implementing theories, models, and frameworks in a way that could not be conceptualized into words. However, the actions of caring adults that recognized the importance of centering the everyday lived experiences of Black youth into their programming and activities pushed me to center and acknowledge these lived experiences in my own future research. I proposed this

study with the hopes that the findings would influence the policies set in place for many youth development programs that serve youth. Although this case study only took place over the span of five weeks, it was that short period of time that shed light on the ways in which SJYD and healing provide youth with the space to navigate oppressive forces and create social change. Adding to Brandon's description of South Dallas [the Sunny South], I argue that in order to do social justice work with youth, we must be open to existing in a space that centers love, community, and healing.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Consent Forms

Adult Staff/Teacher Consent Form

Project Title: Social Justice Youth Development, Radical Healing, and Artistic Expression for Youth of Color

You are being invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Texas A&M University. You are being asked to read this form so that you know about this research study. The information in this form is to provide information to help you decide whether or not to take part in the research or if there is someone you want to inform about this study.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to understand how youth development programs in urban areas that serve youth of color facilitate healing processes. This study specifically examines program elements to understand how young people of color heal through: (1) caring relationships, (2) the development of critical consciousness, (3) community engagement, (4) and the development of a positive cultural identity in youth development program settings. This study uses program evaluation methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups, to explore the healing process among youth of color living that attend the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center.

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are an adult program leader (age 18 and up) affiliated with the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

Seventy-five people (participants) will be invited to participate in this study at the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center.

What Are The Alternatives To Being In This Study?

The alternative to being in the study is not to participate.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

Your participation in this study will last up to 7 months. The procedures you will be asked to perform are described below.

Visit 1 (5 Week Summer Program)

During this visit you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview at the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center. The semi-structured interview will ask you to answer questions about the influence specific program behaviors and activities are having on the lives of the youth participants based on your perspectives.

Visit 2 (3-5 Month After-School/Weekend Program)

During this visit you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview at the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center. The semi-structured interview will ask you to answer questions about the influence specific program behaviors and activities are having on the lives of the youth participants based on your perspectives.

Will Photos, Video or Audio Recordings Be Made Of Me during the Study?

The researchers will make an audio recording during the study so that semi-structured interview discussions can be transcribed only if you give your permission to do so. Indicate your decision below by initialing in the space provided.

_____ I give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

_____ I do not give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

Are There Any Risks To Me?

The things that you will be doing have no more risks than you would come across in everyday life. Although the researchers have tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions/procedures that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. You do not have to answer anything you do not want to.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Private?

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. All participants who complete a survey will be assigned a Study ID number and during a focus group or semi-structured interview each participant will choose a pseudonym for when audio recordings are transcribed. Research records will be stored securely and only study personnel, Aishia Brown and Dr. Corliss Outley, will have access to the records.

Information about you will be stored in locked file cabinet; computer files protected with a password. This consent forms will be filed securely in an official area.

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Who may I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Corliss Outley, PhD, to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research at 979-845-5330 or coutley@tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office.

- Phone number: (979) 458-4067
- Email: irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect on your participation in the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want. A copy of this entire consent form will be given to me.

Participant's Signature

Date

Printed Name

Date

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter

Date

Printed Name

Date

Youth Consent Form

Project Title: Social Justice Youth Development, Radical Healing, and Artistic Expression for Youth of Color

You are being invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Texas A&M University. You are being asked to read this form so that you know about this research study. The information in this form is to provide information to help you decide whether or not to take part in the research or if there is someone you want to inform about this study.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to understand how youth development programs in urban areas that serve youth of color facilitate healing processes. This study specifically examines program elements to understand how young people of color heal through: (1) caring relationships, (2) the development of critical consciousness, (3) community engagement, (4) and the development of a positive cultural identity in youth development program settings. This study uses program evaluation methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups, to explore the healing process among youth of color living that attend the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center.

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are an adult program leader (age 18 and up) affiliated with the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

Seventy-five people (participants) will be invited to participate in this study at the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center.

What Are The Alternatives To Being In This Study?

The alternative to being in the study is not to participate.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

Your participation in this study will last up to 7 months. The procedures you will be asked to perform are described below.

Visit 1 (5 Week Summer Program)

During this visit you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview at the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center. The semi-structured interview will ask you to answer questions about the influence specific program behaviors and activities are having on the lives of the youth participants based on your perspectives.

Visit 2 (3-5 Month After-School/Weekend Program)

During this visit you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview at the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center. The semi-structured interview will ask you to answer questions about the influence specific program behaviors and activities are having on the lives of the youth participants based on your perspectives.

Will Photos, Video or Audio Recordings Be Made Of Me during the Study?

The researchers will make an audio recording during the study so that semi-structured interview discussions can be transcribed only if you give your permission to do so. Indicate your decision below by initialing in the space provided.

_____ I give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

_____ I do not give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

Are There Any Risks To Me?

The things that you will be doing have no more risks than you would come across in everyday life. Although the researchers have tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions/procedures that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. You do not have to answer anything you do not want to.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Private?

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. All participants who complete a survey will be assigned a Study ID number and during a focus group or semi-structured interview each participant will choose a pseudonym for when audio recordings are transcribed. Research records will be stored securely and only study personnel, Aishia Brown and Dr. Corliss Outley, will have access to the records.

Information about you will be stored in locked file cabinet; computer files protected with a password. This consent forms will be filed securely in an official area.

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Who may I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Corliss Outley, PhD, to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research at 979-845-5330 or coutley@tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office.

- Phone number: (979) 458-4067
- Email: irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect on your participation in the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want. A copy of this entire consent form will be given to me.

Participant's Signature

Date

Printed Name

Date

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter

Date

Printed Name

Date

Appendix B

Youth Focus Group Protocol

Introduction, Explanation, Group Process

Moderator introduces herself and explains project's purpose

Hello, my name is Aishia Brown and I am a doctoral student at Texas A&M. I am working on a project to look at processes in the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center and how it influences the caring relationships in your life, your sense of community, engagement, the development of critical analysis of things around you, and the development of cultural identity. This project will help youth programs and youth development researchers to better understand how to assist youth in their daily lives. Before we begin, let me tell you about this focus group and answer any questions you may have.

I am interested in your own opinions, in other words, what you think and feel about each topic. Everything you say in this focus group will be kept private and no names will be used in the final report of this research study. It is important that you give your honest opinions. I will be recording your comments today to review and summarize your thoughts in a final report. The recordings will be kept confidential.

This focus group will last about one hour. Please speak clearly and share your opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. (Ensure everyone has signed the consent form)

Does anyone have any questions? (pause- answer any questions) May I turn on the recorder? (turn on recorder and begin with first question below)

Focus Group Questions

Program Involvement

1. How did you learn about the program?
2. Why did you get involved in the program? Why do you keep coming?
3. What other activities or programs are you currently involved in? What kind of activities are you involved in during the school year?

Program Components & Preliminary Impacts

1. What activities would you like to see in the program?
2. What activities would you like to do more of in the program?
3. If it were up to you, what activities would there be less? Why?
4. If it were up to you, what activities would you not do at all? Why?
5. Why do you like participating as a member of this program?
6. What kinds of things have you gotten the most out of while participating in this program?
7. What have you learned the most while participating in this program?
8. What changes have you noticed in yourself that you think are related to the program?
 - a. PROBE: Was there a specific activity or interaction you had in the program that facilitated this change?

Radical Healing Processes

Caring Relationships

1. How would you describe a caring relationship?
 - a. What does it look like? How does it make you feel?
2. Do you feel you have a caring relationship with any of the adults in this program?
 - a. If yes, how was this relationship established?
3. Do you feel you have a caring relationship with any of your peers in this program?
 - a. If yes, how was this relationship established?

Sense of Community and Community Engagement

4. How would you define your community?
5. Who or what makes up your community?
6. Would you consider this program to be a part of your community?
7. Do you participate or become involved in your community?
 - a. If yes, in what ways?
 - b. If yes, was there something that encouraged you to do it?
 - c. If not, why?
8. How is your community connected to your identity or how you define yourself?
9. Has your community taught you anything?
 - a. If yes, what was it?
10. Have you taught your community anything?

- a. If yes, what was it?

Development of Critical Consciousness

11. What issues do you face in your community or school?

- a. Has this program made you aware of those issues or did you know about them before coming into the program?

12. Do you feel that you can be leaders in your community?

- a. If yes, in what ways?

13. Does participation in this program make you feel prepared to organize your community to address issues? In other words, could you organize an event to address the issues you face in your community or school?

- a. PROBE: If yes, describe how you would organize your community to address these issues?

Development of Positive Cultural Identity

14. What culture or cultures do you identify with?

15. What ethnic group or groups do you identify with?

16. Have you learned more about your culture or ethnic group in this program?

- a. PROBE: If yes, what did you learn and how did you learn it?

Artistic Expression

1. Has this program allowed you to express yourself freely?

- a. If yes, in what ways?

2. Were there specific activities or interactions that gave you space to express yourself?

Closing Thoughts

1. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about it that I have not already asked?

Thank you so much for spending your time answering my questions. I am going to stop the recording now.

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Introduction, Explanation, Interview Process

Moderator introduces herself and explains project's purpose

Hello, my name is Aishia Brown and I am a doctoral student at Texas A&M. I am working on a project to look at processes in the youth development program at the South Dallas Cultural Center and how it influences the caring relationships in the youth participant's lives, their sense of community, engagement, their development of critical analysis of things around them, and their development of cultural identity. This project will help youth programs and youth development researchers to better understand how to assist youth in their daily lives. Before we begin, let me tell you about this interview and answer any questions you may have.

I am interested in your own opinions, in other words, what you think and feel about each topic. Everything you say in this interview will be kept private and no names will be used in the report. It is important that you give your honest opinions. I will be recording your comments today to review and summarize your thoughts in a final report. The recordings will be kept confidential.

This interview will last about one hour. Please speak clearly and share your opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. (Ensure everyone has signed the consent form)

Do you have any questions? (pause- answer any questions) May I turn on the recorder? (turn on recorder and begin with first question below)

Interview Questions

Program Components & Preliminary Impacts

1. What kinds of things do you believe the youth have gotten the most out of while participating in this program?
2. What have you learned the most while participating in this program?
3. What do you believe the youth have learned the most while participating in this program?
4. What changes have you noticed in yourself that you think are related to the program?
 - a. PROBE: Was there a specific activity or interaction you had in the program that facilitated this change?
5. What changes have you noticed in the youth that you think are related to the program?
 - a. PROBE: Was there a specific activity or interaction they had in the program that facilitated this change?

Radical Healing Processes

Caring Relationships

1. How would you describe a caring relationship?
 - a. PROBE: What does it look like? How does it make you feel?
2. Do you feel you have a caring relationship with any of the youth in this program?
 - a. PROBE: If yes, how was this relationship established?

3. Do you feel you have a caring relationship with any of the other adults in this program?

a. PROBE: If yes, how was this relationship established?

Sense of Community and Community Engagement

4. How would you define your community?

5. Who or what makes up your community?

6. Would you consider this program to be a part of your community?

7. Do you believe that youth consider this program to be a part of your community?

8. Do you know if the youth in this program participate or become involved in their community?

a. PROBE: If yes, in what ways?

b. PROBE: If yes, was there something that encouraged them to do it?

c. PROBE: If not, why?

9. Do you believe their community taught them anything?

a. PROBE: If yes, what was it?

10. Do you believe they have taught their community anything?

a. PROBE: If yes, what was it?

Development of Critical Consciousness

11. What issues do you believe youth face in their community or school?

a. PROBE: Has this program made you aware of those issues or did you know about them before coming into the program?

12. Do you feel that youth can be leaders in your community?

- a. If yes, in what ways?
- 13. Does participation in this program make youth feel prepared to organize their community to address issues? In other words, do you believe youth in this program could organize an event to address the issues they face in their community or school?

Development of Positive Cultural Identity

- 14. What culture or cultures do you believe youth in the program identify with?
- 15. What ethnic group or groups do you believe youth in the program identify with?
- 16. Have the youth learned more about their culture or ethnic group in this program?
 - a. PROBE: If yes, what did they learn and how did they learn it?

Artistic Expression

- 1. Has this program allowed youth to express themselves freely?
 - a. If yes, in what ways?
- 2. Were there specific activities or interactions that gave them space to express themselves?

Closing Thoughts

- 1. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about it that I have not already asked?

Thank you so much for spending your time answering my questions. I am going to stop the recording now.